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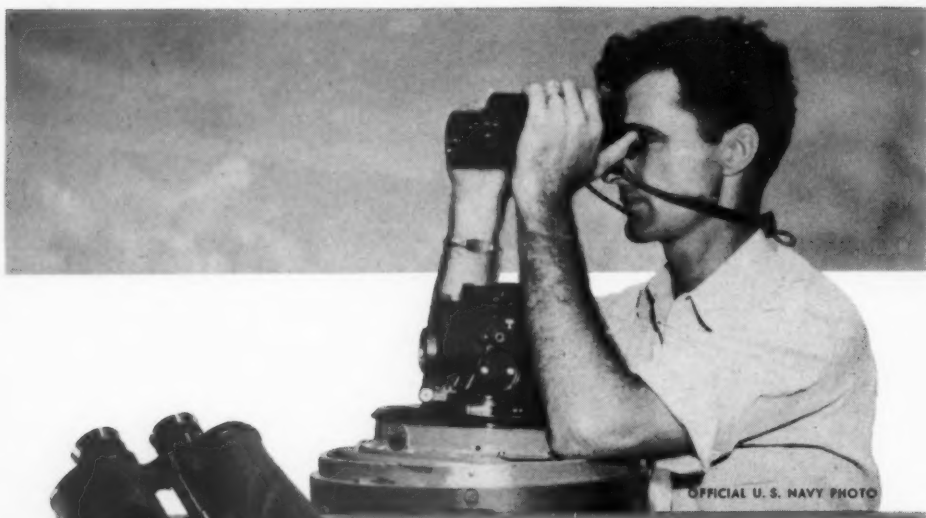
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In two sections—Section I



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1945



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MAGAZINE

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**A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED
TO THE PROTECTION AND PRESER-
VATION OF OUR NATIVE WILDLIFE**

AUDUBON MAGAZINE is published bimonthly by the National Audubon Society in two editions. Subscription price for National Edition (published in one section) \$2.00 per year for the U.S.A., \$2.25 foreign. Single copies 35 cents each. Subscription price for the Regular Edition (published in two sections) \$3.00 per year in the U.S.A., foreign \$3.25. Extra copies of Section II of the Regular Edition may be had at 15 cents per copy for the reports on Fall Migration, Winter Season, Spring Migration and Nesting Season; 25 cents for Breeding Bird Census; 40 cents for Christmas Bird Count. Notice of change of address should be received by 25th of month prior to issue with which it is to be effective.

AUDUBON MAGAZINE regrets that it cannot continue subscriptions beyond date of expiration. Checks and money orders should be made payable to AUDUBON MAGAZINE. Editorial and advertising offices, 1006 Fifth Avenue, New York 28, N. Y. Reentered as second-class matter April 29, 1942 at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1944 by the National Audubon Society.

Postmaster: If undeliverable, please notify Audubon Magazine on form 3578 at 1006 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. 28, N. Y.

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Winter Watching

By Alan Devoe

THE midwinter of the year may seem a poorish time for northern naturalists. This is the season when the snow lies deep, the sky stretches gray and dead, the warm and flowering and populous outdoors has been chilled, withered, silenced. This is the season of withdrawnness and sleep. Woodchucks, chipmunks, bats . . . they are all hidden away, in the "little death" that annually overtakes them. The summer songsters have left us; the glory of green leaves

is withered away; the soft sounds of small breezes and rippling waters and rustling branches have given place to the harsh winter voices of groaning ice-sheets, creaking trees, and the rush and roar of gales that have no gentle sound of life-fostering about them. Outdoors now the stir of life seems only meager and occasional.

But it is possible to say, I think, without any aim to be perverse or paradoxical, that this bleak and frost-pinched time of year may possibly be a more satisfactory season for a woods-watcher than the other seasons are. Spring, summer and autumn all have about them a certain quality of teeming abundance that almost amounts, humanly speaking, to a drawback. Nature in full flower and fecundity is nearly too much for us. Every child, I suppose, has experienced the tragi-comic agonies of trying to take in, all at once, everything that is happening simultaneously in the three rings of a circus. Except in this most stilled and life-restricted season of deep winter, that is exactly what every naturalist is up against; but not just *three* rings to compete for his distracted attention, but dozens, hundreds, thousands.

Who can hear, in the spring, even half the bird-songs for which his ear is eager? Who can make, with more than an almost heart-breaking inadequacy, the woods-rounds necessary for seeing in May all the first comings of bloodroot, anemone and yellow adder's tongue? A hundred thousand June hedgerows plead with us to look into them for birds' nests; a myriad of summer brooks entreat for our watching, and are in competition with butterflies and flowering fields and all the company of mammals and their new broods of youngsters; and in the autumn what bird-lover has ever yet been able to "take in," in the way he'd like to, the migration





of the warblers? No; nature is just too big for us. Our eyes, ears, noses, legs, work overtime and are inadequate. So also our minds. When nature is fully awake and a-bloom and a-stir, the whole is too huge for synthesis, too vast and tumultuous for any encompassing in terms of pattern and meaning. Just as we want very much to find every bird's nest, and cannot because the fields and forests are too large, so we want very much to hold in our minds certain realizations about nature's interrelations and significances, but are defeated because we cannot cope with such teemings and torrents of multiplicity. We are equal to simple arithmetic, but not to solving—or even being able to set down—problems in which every number runs to ciphers beyond counting.

The winter, now, is a meager and lifeless time only by comparison. There is plenty of life a-stir in it to engage all our watching and thinking. But we can give to natural events, now, a little sharper individual attention. Our thoughts can be a little slower and quieter. We can more easily detach, for inspection and pondering, particular ingredients from nature's now reduced totality.

Insects, for instance. Insects? In the middle of the winter? Oh yes. We are not limited to watching for cecropia and promethea cocoons, exposed now on their bare twigs of willow, maple and sassafras. (Though we ought, assuredly, to watch for those, and harvest a few for indoor spring hatching; nature affords no more exciting demonstration of sense keenness than the attraction, by a newly hatched female moth on a window-screen, of all the male moths in the countryside.) There are adult insects, too, abroad now in mature activity. There are just about enough of them for comfortable observing.

Charles W. Manzer



The entomologists reckon, I believe, that altogether there are something like three-quarters of a million species of insects thus far identified; and in summer it is very easy for a man to feel, in a wild agony of frustrated identification, that practically all of them are all around him.

Things are simpler now. Down here by the ice-edged brook; this is the place to look for winter stone-flies, feeding on the algae on thawing tree-trunks, flying in the frosty air as chipperly as May-flies in spring. Here in this snow-drifted field: are all these smudges of discoloration on the whiteness just simple stainings? It's worth

taking a look. They may be gatherings of snow-fleas. Twelve winters ago, in a Berkshire town, snow-fleas came swarming over a whole half-mile or so of snowcape, fairly blackening it. Perhaps we may not hope to see anything quite so spectacular as that? Well, then, there is snow-born *Boreus* as a possible discovery for us. This is the small scorpion fly; and we may find a colony all sprinkled over a patch of snow like a drift of wind-blown pollen.

And again: who ever has a chance, in the summer, to keep his eye on a butterfly as long as he'd like, and marvel sufficiently in undistracted



concentration at this intense and fragile wonder? Now is the time for exploring on brightly sunny days the sheltered woods-places and southern pasture-slopes, and seeing, as we're pretty sure eventually to see, a mourning cloak. Isolated and lovely, in a white hushed world, *Vanessa* shows us butterflyness with a sharp and special poignance.

This is the time for coming to know the mammals, with a kind of intimacy and insight that the other seasons do not permit. This is the time to be trackers. We all realize, in a general way, with how many fellow-mammal lives we human creatures

The snowshoe rabbit (also called varying hare because it gets a white coat in winter) can make easy progress over deep snow.

Photograph by H. H. Pittman

share our patch of earth; but it is not until the snow lies on the ground that we are shown the sharp, sure evidence of how tremendous is our companionship. Tramp the woods all spring and summer and autumn, and how many foxes do we see? Meet how many deer, rabbits, shrews, squirrels, white-footed mice, with a closeness and intimacy to make us vividly realize the presence and numbers of these lives around us?

Step into the outdoors now, and the evidence of our fellow-mammals strikes us with exciting clarity. Here in the snow, tree-hole to tree-hole, goes the filigree of little lacy prints that says a whole company of deer-mice throng this stubble-field at night. Here goes the round neat series of prints, almost one behind the other, impressed in the snow by a trotting fox; and here is the sign of the slow plantigrade meandering of a briefly warmth-roused coon, his unmistakable prints queerly like the mark of a child's naked feet; and yonder run the hindfeet-first criss-crossings of what must have been a dozen squirrels, up with the winter sun.

With breathtaking sharpness the realness and the multitude of the animal community is brought home to us by the record in the snow. What the ecologists say about the web of life is instantly an illuminated truth. Here is the very chart, as though drawn in a diagram, of the innumerable interlinking lives in whose total pattern we are a related part. Track-watching in snow-time gives us this kind of realization; and a special participatory insight, too, into the acts of the animals' lives, though the

actors, themselves, may stay invisible.

What does a fox do in the course of his hours'-long hunting? There are books to tell us; but what book, even the best of them, can give us the real feeling of experience, the real adventure in empathy? Follow that fox-track, now, and we follow the real fox. We read his record; we are participant in his vulpine being; we know him. By their tracks, we can share the life of the deer; we can follow with accurate imagination and understanding where the lithe weasel goes; we can fare a-hunting with a mink. The summer is all a blur and a too-muchness. But in the white stillness, now, each individual creaturely record stands out clear, beckoning and eloquent.

I have said that because the life of outdoors presents itself more limitedly in winter, it is not only easier for us to see each part of it with a sharp individual clarity but also easier for us to be aware of meanings. This is especially true in the case of birds. Prowl the snow-blanketed upland fields now on the day after a blizzard, and suddenly—in this lead-gray, almost birdless world—there is a sweep and a swirl as of a wind-driven host of autumn leaves, and a murmuring and tinkling of unfamiliar song, and, lo! here is a flock of snow buntings. They are at once the focus of the landscape; they engross our whole attention and instantly they kindle our imagination. It is one of the great worths of natural history that it breaks down narrow parochialism. It expands the world for us, letting us know that seeds can drift five hundred miles, and that the welfare of rivers and trees is connected to the welfare of mice and meadowlarks, and that today is biologically joined to yesterday and to tomorrow.

Our horizons stretch. We are not just residents of the town which is our

postal address. After that, we are residents of a county, then of a state, then of a region of the United States, then of America, then of a hemisphere. Vividly do the snow buntings bring home that realization of the far-stretching oneness of the web of life. A snow bunting links us to Greenland. It bonds us with northern Labrador.

In a minute of winter meditation, we expand the periphery of our imaginative experience until it touches and includes the circumpolar. Snow buntings, crossbills, a sadly-sweet murmuring flock of pine grosbeaks discovered in the snow-laden hemlock woods . . . any of these visitants can send our minds on a far journey. We think of them, and their wandering hemispheric travel, and we grow larger. With luck, we may see the most dramatic of all polar messengers: a snowy owl. A winter or two ago these huge white hunters of the Arctic barrens came into New York State in numbers that Dr. Dayton Stoner thought sufficient to be called an invasion.

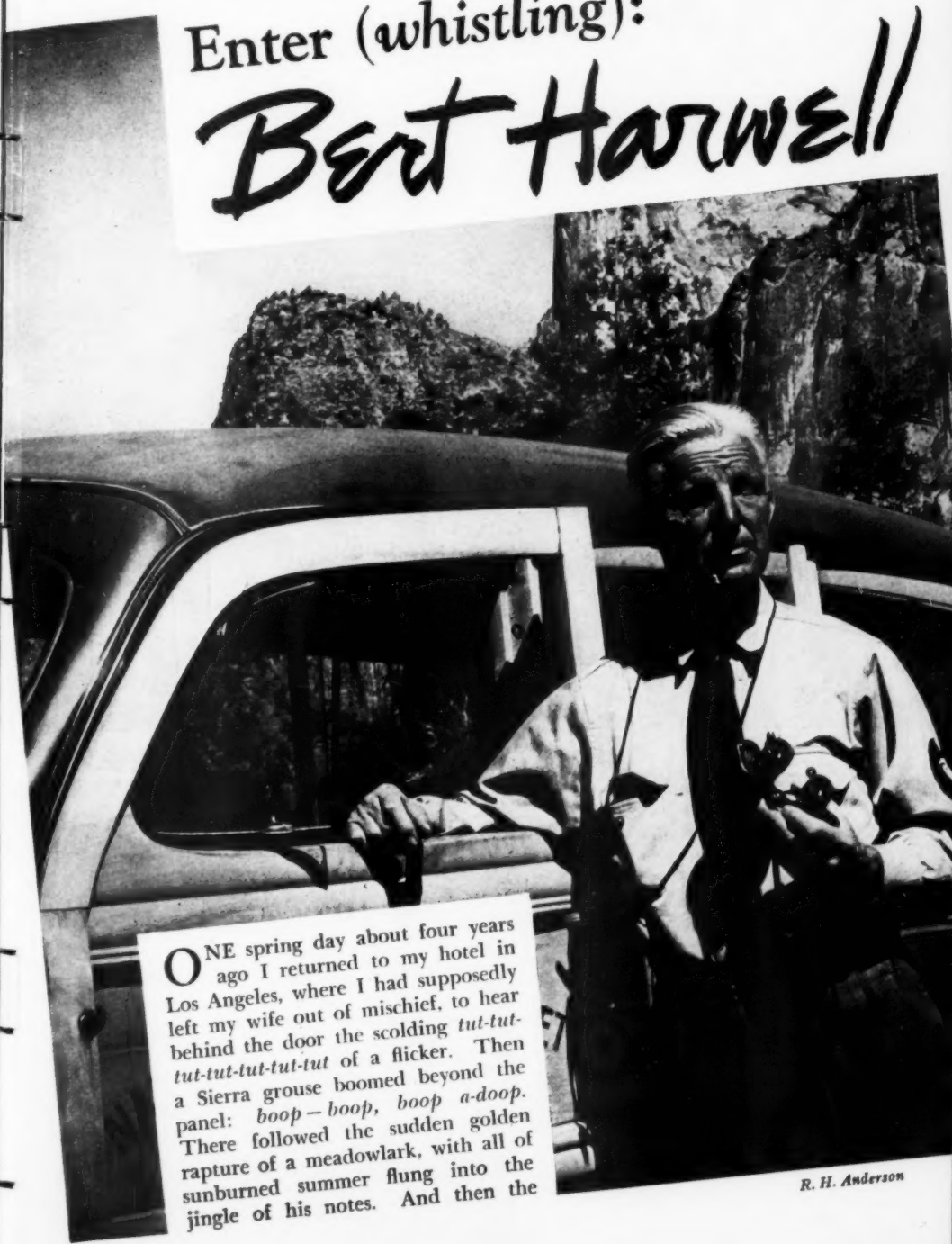
Nothing to watch outdoors in winter? It is surely otherwise. There are fewer things to watch, yes; but on that account, precisely, each is the sharper, the clearer, the more fraught with suggestive implication and with a meaningfulness for us. If many mammals are hibernating, well, the snow-records of the active ones can the better engross us. If birds are few, each is the more vividly stimulating to our sight and our insight. The brook is all ice-choked and almost life-bereft? The better to have an undistracted look at a winter stone-fly.

The snow lies deep. The life of earth is at its least. Just so; and I think there is no more rewarding time in all the seasons of the year for watchfully exploring the outdoors.

By Donald Culross Peattie

Enter (whistling):

Bert Harwell



ONE spring day about four years ago I returned to my hotel in Los Angeles, where I had supposedly left my wife out of mischief, to hear behind the door the scolding tut-tut-tut-tut-tut of a flicker. Then a Sierra grouse boomed beyond the panel: *boop—boop, boop a-doop*. There followed the sudden golden rapture of a meadowlark, with all of sunburned summer flung into the jingle of his notes. And then the

R. H. Anderson



Allan D. Cruickshank

Don Eckelberry

Above: In the Mojave Desert, Bert trains a cinematic eye on a LeConte thrasher's nest and awaits mama's return to her Joshua tree home.

Right: N.A.S.-man Harwell leads a group of wildlife tourists at Salton Sea in California's awe-inspiring Colorado Desert. Conducted to give nature-minded Americans intimate introductions to wilderness areas, these tours, in peace-time, are staged in South Carolina, Florida and the Golden State.



gurgling of a red-winged blackbird, so lifelike that I could smell the very mud of the marsh.

"Well," I said, putting my key in the door, and throwing it wide, "if you *will* leave the screen open—"

"Don," said my wife, "this is Bert Harwell, and all those birds were Bert."

Charles Albert Harwell, who had then just left his post as Park Naturalist at Yosemite to become Western Representative of the National Audubon Society, jumped up with a laugh and came over to shake hands. Eyes quick as a bird's, the humorous mouth of the born whistler, a crest of silver hair, the fresh face of a man who has spent his years out-of-doors—I liked this man as instantly as I do constantly.

Our first evening, there by the fire, was enlivened by the most amazing impersonations of birds I have ever heard. Valley quail called to their hens from behind the chairs; mockingbirds persuaded as they do on hot summer nights; and a canyon wren let down, from some cornice of the room, the silvery cascade of his laughter. That evening was the beginning of a friendship that wears well. Together we've improvised stunts on the lecture platform; we've hunted curlews on Santa Barbara beaches, condors in the mountains of Ventura County, and water ousels in Yosemite.

I mean, of course, that we've hunted them with eyes and ears. Charles Albert Harwell, "Bert" to his friends, "Bird Harwell" to the small children who tag him everywhere, never went hunting with firearms but once. He was then a young boy, and his brother lent him a single-barreled gun with only two shells, of different loads. As he says, "When I saw quail, I had my duck shell in the gun. By the time I had changed, the quail had disap-

peared. Then I stole up on a raft of ducks, but my ammunition was wrong again. By the time I had ejected the quail shot, the ducks had flown. "Somehow," he finishes with a twinkle, "I got home without having had to shoot one darned bird."

By the age of twelve Bert could imitate some fifty California birds of the Santa Rosa region, where he was born, and could have whistled half them right off the bush into his hand if he had wished. "I have whistled my way," he admits, "out of most of my troubles and into many of the best things in my life."

He once asked his mother at what age he began to whistle. "You began," she told him smiling, "when I was twelve years old." She explained that as a girl on an Arkansas farm she learned to whistle like a red-tailed hawk, and taught her baby chicks to scurry to cover at the mere imitation of that war cry. Indeed, she whistled so well that she brought down the parental admonition that whistling girls and crowing hens always come to some bad ends. When she married and moved to California, she resolved to let her children whistle as much as they might want.

Only one made an art of it. Master Charles Albert, sixth of seven children, grew up with music in his ears, though his formal instruction never went beyond 17 piano lessons from an elder brother. All the boys could play brasses or reeds, and Bert was soon in the school's, and later on the town's, band. But his lips were his real instrument, and he can't remember how long ago he began to blow music through them—a happy, lonely little country boy whistling his way home after the cows.

He practiced incessantly, and learned how to turn his tongue upside down, roll it into a tubular organ, how to trill notes, and to blow



Wilkes photo

Famed writer, Donald Culross Peattie, and Bert Harwell examine an old flintlock rifle which John James Audubon used a century ago.

in one cheek without inflating the other. These, and sundry other accomplishments were not recognized at the time as the technical equipment of a virtuoso, and were rated no

higher, by juvenile standards, than the ability to wiggle your ears.

Bert's knowledge of bird life was deeply rooted, from the first, in a country background. His mother

passed on to him her lore under such rustic names for common birds as "yellow-hammer," "fly-up-the-creek," "hell-diver." With other boys he made an egg collection, but his was half-hearted. Deemed at first too young to ford a horse through the rampaging Russian River (there was then no handy bridge across it) he was taught at home until he was eight, out of a McGuffey reader brought from Arkansas. There was no nature study in school in those days, but his mother accompanied him to the woods, much as Thoreau's mother did, and taught him how to observe. Discovering a robin building a nest, young Bert wove a nest of his own on the next bush and, good imitator that he was even then, lined it with mud, as he saw the robin doing.

For he learned, as he taught, by keen first-hand study. And, while attending the University of California at Berkeley, he was already a teacher, earning a way to Columbia and a master's degree in Education. As principal of an elementary school, he broke the ice at his first faculty meeting by whistling for the teachers. Then, as superintendent of schools, he enchanted the children by bringing in mounted bird specimens from the University museum and breathing life into them by imitations of their songs and calls.

At the University of California young Harwell had heard Muir lecture, and opened his ears at Charles Kellogg. At that time the general public, amazed and delighted by Kellogg's charming personality and the white magic of his nature-craft, assumed that his bird imitations were the last word in scientific accuracy, and must derive from some occult knowledge. Bert, cocking one ear in the phonograph horn while a Kellogg record played, turned the other on



Allan D. Cruickshank

Lecture tours took Bert, in 1944-45, through 45 states and into Canada for 250 engagements in universities, colleges and schools, before Audubon Society affiliates, garden clubs, women's clubs, service clubs, and various conservation organizations.

the meadowlark singing outside the window, and tried it himself.

Even while a principal in the elementary school, Bert had been taking lessons in whistling from two graduates of the Agnes Woodward school of whistling in Los Angeles. (It was her pupils who supplied the bird song in the score of "Snow White.") From them he learned the technique of a musical shorthand for recording trills, grace-notes, rolled notes, and other fundamentals of the whistler's art. His own unique methods of analysis of bird song and notation of it have been developed through the years, and he himself has written of this notable contribution to ornithology better than I can write, in earlier issues of *Audubon Magazine*.

He was invited to become a staff artist with KGO, Oakland, when radio was back in the earphone days. Later, on KTAB, and after 1927 on NBC, where he was known as "Bert Harwell, Bird Man," he carried on bird chatter and whistled melodies human and avian. And, notably, he

conducted over the radio the movement that had been begun by the California Audubon Society to select, by ballot, a state bird. With his audience appeal and his natural instinct to popularize all nature subjects that he touched, he set the campaign going like wildfire, and went all out for the valley quail as his candidate. California's finest and most unique bird was thus swept into office in a poll of hundreds of thousands of votes, and officially adopted by the legislature in Sacramento.

For his honeymoon Bert Harwell chose Yosemite. Now at last he could see and hear ousels; now he learned to imitate mountain quail, rosy finches, blue-fronted jays, western tanagers. Deer and bear, Big Trees and Jeffrey pine, snowplant and gentian—each summer they were to become more familiar to him; he was to come to love them as Muir had before him. Without pretending to be a great alpinist, but fearless of height and exhilarated by it, Harwell climbed, without ropes, peak after peak in Yosemite.

Until the day came when he definitely decided to throw up everything else and devote himself to Nature. It was a bold step for a young man with a family, but he struck out not aimlessly, but with a known goal. He enrolled in the new school for ranger naturalists at Yosemite. Within six years he was himself the head of that school.

The first day of his service as a guide on the nature trails of Yosemite, Ranger Harwell attracted a crowd of over a hundred, as compared with the handful that ordinarily accompanied the naturalists' walks. He would collect his crowd not by announcing a guided walk, but by telling stories and pointing out birds, beasts, or rock formations from the hotel porches. The tourists who sit

around playing bridge and writing post cards would soon be hobbling along after him, unconsciously learning to recognize glacial scratchings on boulders, white-throated swifts aloft, and sugar pines by their needles. He instituted auto caravans, got the non-walkers to places they would never have found without him, and pointed out what they would never have seen without him. And always the children trooped after him; his was the first Junior Nature School in the Parks.

When, in 1940, Harwell was called to be the Western Representative of the National Audubon Society, we in California saw him putting new life into the Audubon cause, from Oregon to the Mexican boundary. New Audubon clubs sprang up in the wake of his lectures. Annual Audubon state conventions were held now in one city, now in another. He instituted the first Audubon Wildlife Tours in the West. His station wagon went bumping over the deserts carrying people to see vermilion flycatchers and phainopeplas; it trundled folk out to the marshes of the Sacramento Valley, to watch for Ross' geese and tule goose and little brown cranes.

On these travels across the country, Bert has taken superlative colored motion pictures which bring the watcher into the heart of birdlife, on desert and in mountains, along the strand or in the marshes. With these, he is touring America for the Audubon Society. You will be lucky, this season, if you live in one of those towns that has scheduled a Bert Harwell lecture. If you are wise you'll go far, just to be out there in front when Bert steps up to the piano, cocks his head, cocks his eye like a bird, and, pursing his lips, lets out of the cage of his memory all the songs, all the springtime, stored there from his years afield.



The Phantom of the Marshes

By Alexander Sprunt, Jr.

Kite photographs by Allan D. Cruickshank

IF MOST bird students were asked to prepare a list of the half dozen American species more depleted in numbers than any others and about which more alarm is felt, it is altogether likely that the majority would designate the following: whooping crane, California condor, ivory-billed woodpecker, trumpeter swan, Carolina parakeet and Eskimo curlew.

This presupposes that the last two are still not "officially" extinct. There is enough doubt existing today to retain their names among the living, although authentic observations on both are lacking in recent years. Certainly, however, the Carolina parakeet and Eskimo curlew deserve rank among the very rarest of birds for, of the above six, they are the more desperately situated.

There is another species which, unfortunately, would fit well into any such list but is rarely mentioned in any similar category. It is occupying

today the same condition which characterized the great white heron in 1935, to wit, a steady disappearance from our avifauna before the eyes of contemporary ornithologists with few realizing the fact. This bird is the Everglade kite.

In some respects this is not to be wondered at. It is a species known to comparatively few observers because, like the great white heron again, it occupies a very restricted range in a single state—Florida. Though long an ornithological mecca and visited by thousands of amateurs yearly, Florida is a large state and contains numerous nooks and corners unfamiliar to those who spend months and even years in the resort areas where most visitors congregate. Others, who have had the bird in mind as a specific objective, know where to look and have succeeded in seeing it, but there are many who wished sincerely for a glimpse of it without success. Such a result is



Don Eckelberry

Along the marsh-rimmed shore of Lake Okeechobee (a Seminole name meaning "big water") the Everglade kite makes its last stand in this country. Drainage is its enemy.

becoming more and more frequent despite the fact that seekers visit localities once known to harbor the kite.

Florida presents some remarkable illustrations of avian distribution. A species may be really abundant in one section of the state and totally lacking in others. You might spend several years north of Orlando or one of the coasts up and down from Cape Sable and never see a caracara, for instance. You could, on the other hand, put in every season for the rest of your life in the Lake Okeechobee region where the caracara is a daily sight and never get a glimpse of a Florida jay. It would be quite useless to look for burrowing owls about St. Augustine and Daytona Beach, but a day's run on the Kissimmee Prairie would hardly fail to reveal them. In other

words, you must know something of individual habitat and distribution, else much disappointment will result.

Formerly, that is to say only 10 or 15 years ago, almost any of the extensive fresh-water marshes of Florida held varying populations of the Everglade kite. Investigation of any other type of habitat would be futile, for the bird lives nowhere else. However, many such spots are marsh no longer, and therefore there are no kites. Two distinct factors have militated against the bird from the human standpoint, completely aside from its own inability to adapt itself to any change in environmental conditions. These are (1) the craze for drainage, which has been a curse to Florida in recent years and (2) the shooting of the kite by duck-hunters. A contributory,



though minor cause, has been the collecting of skins and eggs.

In amplification of these factors, we must recall the highly specialized character of the bird as a species. It is one of the comparatively few birds which indulges an extremely limited diet, so limited indeed, as to embrace but a single item! This is a fresh-water snail of the genus *Pomacea* (formerly *Ampullaria*), its specific name being *caliginosa* (formerly *depressa*). Nothing else is eaten, and so well known is this habit even to the unobservant natives that they universally refer to the kite as "snail hawk."

The snail was once quite abundant throughout much of Florida and still occurs in numbers in a few localities. It reaches the size of a child's fist, though the ones taken by the kite are usually considerably smaller. The kite extracts the animal from the shell by means of its scimitar-shaped beak

while holding the snail in its talons.

The drainage operations which have swept the state, ostensibly for the provision of additional agricultural ground, or as the result of real estate booms have, of course, greatly reduced the marshes. When these dry out the snails disappear and with them, the kite. Therefore, areas which once supported quite a number of them do so no longer, being completely barren even of the supposed benefits which were to accrue by the removal of the water. In numberless instances neither agricultural ground nor building lots transpired, only a flat, dreary expanse of dejected weeds either wet or dry depending on the current rainfall. Such an area is good for precisely nothing. Its original state destroyed, it benefits nobody or anything.

One of the most notable of the fresh-water areas in Florida has long been known as the St. John's River Marshes. They extend along the river (which by the way, is one of the few in this country that flows north) on each side, occasionally widening into lakes of considerable size. From Vero Beach to Titusville, only a short distance inland from the east coast, this area once formed a veritable avian paradise and there are still parts of it where rails, gallinules, limpkins, herons and ibises abound. Drainage, however, has altered much of it and has almost entirely depleted the former numbers of the Everglade kite. What has happened there has a parallel in many another marsh area of the state and is a vivid illustration of the fact that a species can be extirpated and, as a matter of fact, exterminated, without a shot being fired at a specimen! All that is necessary toward this regrettable end is the change of environment, a process fully as deadly as any powder and shot.

The duck-hunter factor might seem

at first glance to be farfetched, but it is by no means an exaggeration. This by reason of the fact that ducks and kites frequent much the same localities, and primarily because what appears to be the last stronghold of the kite happens to lie in one of the most popular ducking grounds of the entire state, i.e., Lake Okeechobee. Along the northern and western shores of that great body of water which covers 717 square miles, lie wide areas of grassy "reefs," willow beds and thickly grown shallows, teeming with ducks in fall and winter. Here resort hundreds of gunners from many parts of the state; here are camps which cater to them with boats, guides, blinds and over-night cabins. From the mouth of the Kissimmee River on around to Clewiston on the south shore, ideal shooting prevails, as well as scattered spots on the east shore.

It is in this general area that the National Audubon Society maintains its Lake Okeechobee Sanctuary. Here the Everglade kite is under constant watch by warden patrol, and during the hunting season and at all other times of year it constitutes one of the principal responsibilities of the Society's protective program.

This now is the haunt of the Everglade kite, for the snail crop is tremendous and the vegetation exactly suited to its nesting and roosting habits. The hunter in a blind, with his decoys in front of him, awaiting a flight of ducks, sometimes has considerable intervals of time on his hands. Often in these tedious interims he sees a slow flying "hawk" cruising by within easy range. What follows usually is that a sudden bang sounds forth and the bird crumples loosely to the water. The hunter has relieved the tedium; he has sharpened his aim and performed what he considers to be a meritorious service by the elimination of another hawk, since it is

his mistaken doctrine that the only good hawk is a dead one!

Multiply such an instance by dozens, and the result to the kite population of the Lake is inevitable. A hunter-taxidermist friend of mine, living in West Palm Beach, has for some seasons been keenly alarmed over this danger, for he has seen firsthand evidence of it. On several occasions he has found dead kites floating in front of duck blinds and in some cases the birds have been so fresh that he was able to make excellent skins or mounts of them. In one instance he found four birds around one shooting stand.

Recognizing this practice as one of the cardinal detriments confronting the future of the kite, the National Audubon Society prepared a brief pamphlet prior to the shooting season of 1940-41, appealing to sportsmen for cooperation in the stoppage of such senseless and thoughtless slaughter. Mention was made of the bird's increasing rarity, its exclusive food habits and general habits and appearance. The text was accompanied by an illustration of the kite in flight and at rest. These folders were distributed to sporting-goods stores, duck camps, hotels and individuals in strategic localities throughout much of the state, and the benefit therefrom, while difficult to appraise with exactness, has certainly been evident in some cases.

The activities of skin-and-egg-collectors, while still extant, does not bulk as large as it once did. Naturally, when a species of any sort becomes more and more uncommon, the desire for its possession increases, but private collections are on the decline in this country and most museums have a sufficient number of specimens for record and study. Only occasional individuals remain as a menace, but with the kite as reduced as it is, this cannot be overlooked, for

even one or two determined collectors could wreak havoc.

These then are the reduction factors induced by man which have brought the Everglade kite to its present dangerously low level. What physiological contributions exist are as yet by no means clear, assuming that there are some. From certain indications it would appear that they do exist. In the nesting season of 1938, for instance, there was a marked condition of infertility of eggs, at least in the Lake Okeechobee nesting grounds. Of 10 nests under observation that year, holding three eggs each, the following conditions prevailed: In four nests only one egg hatched; in three nests two eggs hatched; in one nest none hatched and in two nests all hatched.

So then, out of a total of 30 eggs, 14 were infertile, or at any rate failed to hatch, a percentage of almost 50. The following season this condition was again apparent but not to such a marked degree. It obtained even less in 1940, so that there appears to be no explanation for the high percentage of failure in the 1938 season.

Two general nesting areas occur in the lake, both well off-shore but in identical vegetation, *i.e.*, tall reeds and grass interspersed with willows. Feeding areas extend between the nesting "reefs" and the shoreline, this being largely marsh, while the open water of the lake lies on the southern and eastern sides of the grassy area. Therefore, kites can sometimes be seen from the only road which skirts the northern and western rims of the lake. It was from this road that participants in the first of the Audubon Wildlife Tours in 1940, based at Okeechobee, were so fortunate as to see one or more kites on every one of the 16 trips comprising the Tours! This astonishingly consistent record seemed almost too good to be true.



Author Sprunt scans the reeds for kites.

It was! In the Tour season of 1941 the same number of trips was made but kites were seen on only eight of them, while in 1942 the trips were increased to 20, but not a single kite was seen on any of them! Thus the ratio varied in three years, from an observation of 100% per season, to 50%, to zero. The Tours were not conducted in 1943-4 because of current difficulties connected with the war situation but I was in the Okeechobee region for six weeks during



Alfred M. Bailey



Opposite is an Everglade kite at its nest. The food requirements of this bird are so specialized that civilization is pushing it out. At lower left is its meal ticket, the *Pomacea* snail (shown here with eggs). The flight pictures show how much more an Everglade kite (lower) resembles a *buteo* hawk than its graceful relative the swallow-tailed kite (upper).

January and February, 1943, during which time I was constantly in the field on frequent patrols both on shore and the lake. Not a kite was seen along the north shore during that time. Investigation by boat in the southwestern corner of the lake, however, revealed the presence of a few birds there, this being the other nesting area mentioned previously. This sharp decrease is probably not an actuality in the total population but may only be a shift in feeding territory.

To give any specific population figures for today would be very difficult, not to say impossible. There is nothing to go upon in the way of a precedent except in the most general sense. It is quite safe to say that the species is much reduced over 10 years ago, or even five. I have had some eight years of intensive field work in nearly every month here and there throughout Florida, including, of course, some of the best known haunts of the kite. I have seen the kite disappear largely, if not entirely, from the St. John's River Marshes north and south of Lake Washington, Brevard County. Careful and repeated efforts of this bird to locate in areas south of Vero Beach and the Loxahatchee Marshes have thus far failed. The same thing is true of other regions.

The natives who know the "snail hawk" best are of that fraternity designated "froggers." These are the men who, in their shallow-draft and narrow craft, penetrate the marshes in search of the highly marketable commodity, frog-legs. They work in the

heart of the country which the kite prefers and some of them have acted as collectors for outside principals. Many of them know the bird thoroughly, and when they say, "We use-ter see 'em, but they ain't hyuh now," it means that the birds are definitely not about. This has been the answer time and again, from marsh after marsh, and from what *was* marsh once.

In reducing the population to specific numbers it must be borne in mind that the expressed opinions are those of the writer and are not necessarily "officially" recognized. They are based on personal field work and contact with those who have known the kite for many years. It is my belief that the bird is now making its last stand in and about Lake Okeechobee. Sporadic pairs may exist elsewhere, there is always such a possibility, but I know of no such locations. In point of actual numbers I would place the kite next to the California condor in rarity, exceeded only by it and the ivory-billed woodpecker. This, of course, if one grants that the Carolina parakeet and the Eskimo curlew are, to all practical purposes, already gone. If there are more than 25 to 50 nesting pairs of kites left in Florida it would surprise me.

It will be seen, then, that its condition is desperate, far more so than the majority of bird students realize. What is being done about it? Ever since protection has been afforded the Okeechobee-Kissimmee area and parts of the St. John's River Marshes by the National Audubon Society, the Everglade kite has been a particular charge of the wardens in these areas. Every possible effort is put forth to guard its known nesting grounds and its feeding territories. Protection about the lake is on a 12-month basis; the marshes are patrolled during the duck season and hunters contacted

and watched. Nothing is being left undone to build up and conserve the slender nucleus on which the Society has to work. It can be depended upon to continue this vital procedure.

There is much about the kite that is attractive. The wide sweeps of sky and water where it lives, the great beds of purple hyacinths framed by the green of rushes and cattails, make a background of unusual beauty. It is a tame species and allows remarkably close approach, which makes it easy to study but which has not helped it, in many cases! Sitting in a boat, with a pair of kites hunting snails nearby, the observer will find that the birds cruise by within a few yards at times, seemingly oblivious to observation. Only one other bird resembles it sufficiently to cause confusion to the amateur, that being the marsh hawk.

Superficially, the two are a good deal alike at first glance for both have the conspicuous white patch at the base of the tail; both inhabit similar surroundings, and the streaked immature female kites resemble that sex of the hawk. The adult male kite is uniformly dark except for the white tail patch. There are, however, distinct points of difference between the two species, among which are the very *broad* wings of the kite compared to the narrower pinions of the hawk, and the steady, even-keeled flight with none of the wavering, tilting actions so characteristic of the hawk.

In its nesting habits, the Everglade kite departs considerably from raptorial custom for it forms scattered colonies of anywhere from two or three pairs to eight or ten. The nest is somewhat frail and is attached to the stems of sawgrass and rushes, or placed in the crotch of a small willow. The eggs number two or three and are very handsome, being heavily

splashed and marbled with shades of brown on a light ground.

The nests are nearly always over water of varying depths, and this fact, together with the denseness of the reeds and aquatic growth, to say nothing of the presence of numerous water (cottonmouth) moccasins, makes investigation of the domestic life of this kite a wet, warm, and occasionally a dangerous, job. At times, a flat-bottomed boat can be pushed up close to a nest. Young kites are attractively clothed in down.

Despite its name the bird has never been particularly partial to the Everglades. In scores of crossings of the Tamiami Trail the writer has never seen this kite from there, though in former years it was possible to do so. Indeed, I have only once observed it in the whole 'glades area, that being a specimen seen over the sawgrass at the head of Shark River. Since its occurrence is invariably governed by the existence of the *Pomacea* snail, it is probably the case that this creature has been greatly reduced by drainage in the 'glades and is far more common in other fresh-water marshes.

So essentially Floridian is the Everglade kite that it has never occurred outside of that state, as far as can be determined by a search of the literature. Though certain other species are normally confined to Florida as residents, they appear here and there outside the state as storm-blown individuals or casual wanderers, examples being the great white heron, sooty and noddy terns. However, the Everglade kite has not, as yet, even joined that category, which is an additional fact of interest in connection with the species. Let us hope, at least, that it will continue to form an attraction which will lead many to visit its haunts of watery greenness, to see this Florida avian citizen at its only home in these United States.

PERSONALITIES

in feathers

*Cedar Waxwings by
Allan D. Cruickshank*



Highlights of forty-one years of
bird-attracting in one backyard

By Gertrude Viles Grover

OUR backyard feeding station had its beginnings in the days when the National Audubon Society was being born, in the days when only a few people were interested in the fate of birds and when home-site sanctuaries were almost unheard of. Not a person of our acquaintance shared our enthusiasm, or expressed the slightest interest in a home environment which could be made into a paradise for birds.

We found such a place high on a hill overlooking the Kennebec in Maine, on the outskirts of a city where fields and woods were just around the corner. In front of our old-fashioned cottage grew apple

trees and at the back was a hedge of bushes. During our period of organizing, the birds had only casual attention, but in the fall of 1903 we definitely established a feeding station. In the beginning, a simple tray was placed at a window, another on a balm of Gilead close to the house, and suet was placed in several conspicuous locations.

The first birds to come were English sparrows. They came in numbers and still greater numbers, but we welcomed them for we knew that such a horde would eventually attract other species. True, in ignorance, we began by feeding scratch feed and plenty of it, which would

have been the sparrows' choice had they been able to whisper in our ears. But within a month, the chickadees, blue jays and woodpeckers began to drift in and were soon followed by nuthatches, tree sparrows, goldfinches and redpolls.

The winter visitors were delightful, but spring migration brought us thrills which even we had not anticipated. There were so many different species, we could not begin to identify them before their fleeting visits were over. Bluebirds, song, chipping and white-throated sparrows, purple finches, catbirds, orioles, grosbeaks, the wood pewee and least flycatcher, one or two vireos and the American redstart were among our earliest visitors. At least eight or ten species of warblers with numberless others came and went incognito, which in later years were readily recognized. Our daily records, kept during the years, show that our annual roster is approximately sixty species.

During this first migration, we began to realize that our feeding formula was inadequate. We experimented with all available grains and mixtures and watched closely for a preference which, in the final analysis, proved to be Hungarian grass seed and sunflower seed. Thereafter, these became our staple.

In summer we made great progress in becoming acquainted with birds. Rose-breasted grosbeaks nested over the porch, bluebirds took the hollow apple tree limb and tree swallows occupied one of our bird houses, in defiance of the English sparrows.

English sparrows and starlings were welcome then, as now, in our bird paradise. Usurpation of nesting boxes is the English sparrows' worst offense. Their early spring service should be placed to their credit, for it is of great economic value. As soon as snow disappears and before migratory

birds arrive, they comb the gardens inch by inch and destroy innumerable insect pests as fast as they emerge.

Starlings, usually considered an annoyance at feeding stations, have never become a problem at ours. They and garbage disposal are a joint consideration; we deposit table waste at a proper distance from the buildings and it feeds the birds, keeps them from the trays and eliminates the material, all at the same time.

As the years have passed, the finger of time has left its mark, enriching our experience with birds and plants. Old apple trees have given way to lawn and gardens, but maples and shrubbery meet requirements in summer and a white spruce is a fine haven for birds in winter. The mountain ash has reached maturity, raspberries, blackberries, chokecherries, buckthorn, high-bush cranberry and box elders supply a banquet for the birds. During the years, we have entertained a number of unusual guests, learned much about bird behavior and become intensely interested in operating a bird - hospital - and - rehabilitation center.

In February, 1916, we welcomed our first unusual guests—nine evening grosbeaks and one Bohemian waxwing—the only one to visit us in forty-one years, so far as we know. The grosbeaks fed upon the winged seeds of the box elder, their favorite food, while the waxwing sat quietly and watched them at their feast. During the entire ten days which the waxwing spent with us, we never saw it take food.

Three years later, a mockingbird dropped in for a visit of several weeks. Among the first to be reported in Maine during the winter months, its food was a new problem. It pecked at the suet a few times, but scorned everything on the trays even when supplemented with meat and dough-

nut. We tried raisins, which were eaten sparingly. But fresh apple appealed immediately, and each morning thereafter half an apple was tied, open-side up, to the branch which was the bird's favorite perch. By nightfall the skin was a clean cup, the pulp entirely gone.

In late February, the bird honored us with a low sweet warbling song which increased somewhat as the season advanced, but never approached the cadence of its native haunts. Three weeks later, it transferred to a neighbor's orchard where wild grapes of the previous season provided food until it vanished.

Another year, the highlight of the season was a mysterious little visitor who established sleeping quarters in our shed. For several days its identity was a secret, for we did not see it go in at night and merely glimpsed it in the dusk of early morning. Finally I took my post behind the stairs and, after two hours of patient waiting, saw it come to a rosebush close to the door, hesitate for a moment, then dart to the very corner of the building. After darkness fell and it had settled comfortably for the night in a mortise hole in a beam, we cautiously investigated with flashlight and found a Carolina wren! Although rare in our range, it chose to sleep there for four weeks, disappearing with the first snowfall which came in late October.

Unusual guests and seasonal transients have always provided us with many a thrill, but it is our regulars that furnish steady entertainment and teach us most about bird behavior. There is never a dull moment at the feeding stations. A few years ago we replaced the open trays with modern covered structures. In our snowy country, covered trays are essential to eliminate waste, but the birds were not in sympathy with this move to-



Louisa R. Gleason

"It is our regulars, like the downy woodpecker, which furnish steady entertainment."



David Gelston Nichols

"The first to come were English sparrows and we welcomed them. They would attract other species."

ward economy. Grosbeaks, purple finches, song and chipping sparrows brought up their young on the open trays, but they apparently lack confidence under cover. Even an indigo bunting that came in early spring for five seasons, refused the new trays and fed upon the ground. So to re-establish favor, we added a chaff-bed to our equipment which the birds now prefer to all else.

In a spot close to the house, protected from storms and cats, in winter the snow is swept away and barn chaff scattered over the area. Hungarian and sunflower seeds are added to the mixture, which stimulates

scratching and provides no end of pleasure for an inside audience.

We have made some interesting discoveries in composite flocks. Vesper, swamp, field and Lincoln's sparrows which are ordinarily listed in open country, occasionally join our regulars of grosbeaks, song and chipping sparrows and purple finches. Undoubtedly, this is not rare, but merely escapes notice when feeding stations are at a greater distance from the point of observation. The hoary redpoll, a winter stranger, was readily identified by his white mantle and pantalets.

We have seen two demonstrations of first aid on the chaff-bed. At least, seen through human eyes they appear to be such, although the birds, themselves, may have been motivated by something other than kindness. A purple finch flew against the house and fell to the ground partially stunned. As it began to revive and raised itself up, another finch ran to it and put a sunflower seed in its beak. Another day a tree sparrow, which had been sitting for some time with its feathers puffed out, finally fell over on its side. The sparrow beside it quickly grasped its wing, lifted the bird to its feet and repeated a second time, holding its companion up for a few seconds. The assistance was in vain, however, for the bird died a sudden death.

Our latest addition to the feeding station which was installed two years ago is a so-called "monkey-line"—a wire from the house to the shed from which are suspended a trace of corn, a bag of suet, two feeders (one of which is a home-made affair filled with peanut butter), a coconut shell of sunflower seeds and an occasional doughnut. The coconut shell has an opening at the side to admit chickadees and nuthatches. When the evening grosbeaks (who have now been

coming fairly regularly since that first visit in 1916) arrived, they discovered the coconut shell, but were puzzled as to what to do about it. They sat on the clothesline and watched proceedings and made an occasional attempt to master the situation. One finally clung to the tiny perch under the opening, while the others watched. The lucky one poked his head in the shell, extracted a seed, which it ate while the coconut whirled round and round. When the pace slowed sufficiently, one of the other grosbeaks knocked him off and took his turn. This performance continued from November to April, and was witnessed by bird lovers, laymen and children.

Although feeding-station observation is a never-ending source of delight, it is when you establish a bird-hospital - and - rehabilitation center that you really begin to realize how much there is to learn about bird behavior. How shall we account for the erratic changes and sudden departures from long-established habits? Under adverse conditions, birds are surprisingly intelligent, friendly and cooperative and submit to the inevitable with remarkable fortitude. Comparison of characteristics in individuals of the same species is especially interesting and they differ so widely that it raises the question, "Do birds develop idiosyncrasies in the wild, or only in captivity and through contact with human beings?"

Among my patients have been a black-billed cuckoo, chimney swift, cliff swallow, alder flycatcher, goldfinch, purple finch, mourning dove, rose-breasted grosbeaks, redpolls, bluebirds, robins (the most difficult of all), sparrows (song, tree, chipping and English) and eight cedar waxwings.

Experience has introduced us to a number of injuries and diseases. Two tree sparrows, which we saw fall from

a tree, were dead when picked up, which leads to the surmise that the species may be subject to heart attack. During a single winter, we picked up twelve birds—six of which were stricken with a fatal paralysis. One tree sparrow made a remarkable recovery from apparent epilepsy. It would fall to the bottom of its cage, spin around on its back, then lie rigid for a matter of ten minutes. From four seizures the first day, it seemed near the end. But in succeeding days, the attacks became less frequent and within a month the bird was well and ready for release.

Young nestlings are force-fed with bread and milk or cooked cereal, supplemented, later, with hard-boiled egg and raw beef. Their development is amazing for they actually grow up in a few days. When there are several to be fed every hour, from six in the morning to six at night, it is a full-time job!

Two tiny chipping sparrows were brought to our door so near death that one died during the night. The other revived and developed into a phenomenal creature of energy and mischief. He was terrified outside of the house, and repeatedly refused freedom. For exotic behavior he was Exhibit A. We called him Peep, for he saw and investigated everything new except strangers. When they stepped in, he vanished from sight in the twinkling of an eye; then when everyone was seated, and quiet reigned, he swept over their heads, to their surprise and oftentimes to their horror!

When not tearing around the rooms, he shared a cage with two crippled cedar waxwings. He had a tray of seeds and chaff which he enjoyed very much, but ate generously from the waxwings' supply of orange, date, grape, egg and lettuce. Mashed potato was a special favorite, and he



Allan D. Cruickshank

"When you start mothering young chipping sparrows, it is a full-time job from six in the morning to six at night."

never failed to appear at breakfast to take several turns at a doughnut. He pulled pins from cushions, hairs from my head, knocked the waxwings from their perch and pulled their tails. He was a tantalizing rascal, but a fascinating pet.

His song was his outstanding point of difference, unlike that of any other bird. The loud liquid notes seemed to be a cross between those of the tree sparrow and purple finch. Modest,

he sang only when alone—as if he sensed the humiliation of an outcast. He would sit on a chair and pour out a melody unbelievable from the throat of a common chipping sparrow. After more than three years, his career ended suddenly—he was found dead in a chair, shortly after leaving my shoulder.

My experience with cedar waxwings has been delightful and illuminating. Many other birds have come and gone, but waxwings have lived continuously in our house for nearly nine years. They are sweet-tempered, friendly creatures which form definite attachments to people.

Buddy came first, crippled by a broken wing. With great difficulty he learned to fly about the house, but preferred to travel on my shoulder. His condition never permitted release, so he remained a member of our household for four years.

Before Buddy died, we acquired another waxwing that had been badly mangled by a cat. They adopted one another immediately. Buddy picked up food and danced back and forth in an effort to have it accepted. The newcomer, a young half-grown bird, imitated Buddy's every lead. When Buddy ate, he ate; when Buddy drank, he drank; when Buddy came to my shoulder, he came. If Peep, the chipping sparrow, saw them, he jumped on my shoulder, too, and we all toured the house together.

The young waxwing's injuries were very severe—one wing entirely gone and the other useless—so he never dared follow Buddy into the bath. He sat on my finger and still does while I drench him with a clothes sprinkler. When placed on the floor for exercise, he went into reverse, backward instead of forward, so acquired the name of Funny.

Today, Funny feels the pinch of war. Although he is served canned

blueberries, raspberries, orange, raisins (they must be white), apple, lettuce and his favorite bread and milk, he must live without grapes during part of the year, since the usual supply has not been coming from South America. He must be content without dates, for the duration, as the imported are no longer available and he refuses the California variety, even at 75 cents a pound!

During Funny's four years sojourn with us, several other waxwings have been in and out as patients. One, an adult, was wild and vicious, pecking me when I offered it food and occasionally pecking Funny. Its badly sprained wing mended in three months and it was a happy day for all concerned when we could take the bird to a blueberry field and release it.

Three baby waxwings, rescued from a nest in a felled tree, lived up to the good reputation of the species. They were gentle and sweet and altogether polite as they passed cherries from one to another. During their five weeks with us, they became so tame, we were fearful for their safety when released. We selected a fruit-laden cherry tree, in an isolated field far from the highway, people and cats (we hope). We stood by for an hour, during which time two came down and asked to be fed. The pangs of foster-parenthood are deeply felt, but we know that birds must be released to live their lives as nature intended.

The incidents which are here recorded are but a few of the many we have experienced during forty-one years of bird-attracting. They have been filled with pleasure as well as effort and not the least of our reward lies in the fact that others have shared our hospitality. Our cripples especially have taught many children to look upon wild creatures with a new sympathy and understanding.



TIMES/DO

It's a good thing, occ
back over the past. I hel
perspective for the pre

This little number, with herring gull feathers entirely covering the cap, was very chic at the turn of the century.

By John J. Elliott

AMONG the living, today, are many who know the history of the bird-protection movement at first hand. On my own home ground of Long Island, New York, there are those who still remember the days when robins were shot in autumn, packed and shipped to the market in barrels along with flickers and other songbirds; when meadowlarks brought fifteen cents, young herring gulls twenty cents and adults forty cents each for the adornment of women's hats, while small sandpipers by the

hundreds were sold for four cents each for the same purpose; when the last large flocks of passenger pigeons, gregarious to the end, flew their low, straight flights over a long-strung-out line of early-fall hunters along the South Shore and small groups were shot down, later to be bunched and sold for six cents a bird. In the fall, tree swallows were induced to alight upon horizontal poles supported by two uprights. Then the gunner, shooting the lined-up birds, wrought havoc with the migrating hordes along the coast.

As the past recedes further and

DO CHANGE!

thing, occasionally, to look
past. It helps you find a new
or the present and future.

Skins of many smaller birds (such as the tern in this fashion plate) were used whole as millinery decoration.



further into the distance, our knowledge of it becomes more and more dependent upon the records left by those who were contemporaries of the times. Many eye-witness records have already gone into the books, but some are still memories in the minds of living men. Some of these memories belong to Nelson Verity, veteran guide and hunter of Seaford, Long Island, who, in his ninety-first year, still follows the bay. They should become part of the written record. His tales, together with all the other tales of the past, when contrasted with what we know of the present, give us

new strength for our own battles, for they help us see, without a doubt, that times *do* change!

Among the most wanton incidents related by Nelson Verity are those which concern the tern colonies which were badly depleted even before the breech-loading shotguns became popular. For years, both migrating and breeding terns had been killed in large numbers. Two men, alone, claimed they killed over six hundred terns in one day, out of Freeport. So busily engaged were they that, reportedly, their gun barrels, often too hot to handle, were thrust into the

bay to cool. Moreover, the colonies sometimes were egged and hunted over at the same time. If any of the remaining eggs hatched, general disturbance on the feeding and nesting grounds, or the killing of the parents, soon left most of the young in a precarious condition and, shortly, stiff and lifeless in or near their sandy beds.

It was an era of slaughter and wantonness and little did milady know the price paid by the feathered kindred for "the saucy little bird on Nellie's hat."

These and the following facts are as related by Mr. Verity and have been checked in detail; I will relate them in story form. The time was fifty years ago. The man, referred to in the story, might be any of the veteran feather hunters of which there were dozens along the South Shore of Long Island at that time.

* * *

It was low tide. The dark muddy banks, encrusted with mussels widened, disclosing a small skiff making for the mouth of the creek.

The usual summer breeze had not materialized that morning. With the sail hardly filled and the centerboard scraping the muddy bottom, the boat barely moved into the open bay. In the distance, on all sides, low-lying salt marshes already were shimmering in the sunlight, the heat-waves blurring the vision as they rose off the hot flats. The man, late and impatient, usually out of the creek by sunrise, dropped the useless sail, pulled up the centerboard, got out his oars and rowed in a southwesterly direction along the South Shore of Long Island toward Jones Inlet some four miles distant.

On the bottom of the boat lay several half-bushel baskets and carefully propped up near the bow was a double-barreled shotgun. As the man



passed a point, a loud squawking call drew his attention to a fairly large bird proceeding out of the south. It was a green parrot which had supposedly escaped from a passing ship. As it directed its course past the boat a report rang out and Polly had squawked its last. Picking up the bird, the man rowed on to the inlet.

The sand spit lay stark white in the sunlight; cool, curling ripples—tidal wash from the nearby inlet—broke with a faint murmur, exposing more of the sloping edges as the tide receded. Back on the raised center stood about a dozen common terns.



Allan D. Cruickshank

Now the terns and shore birds flock again on the beaches.

These, and a few scattered birds, were all that were left of the nesting colonies in that area. As the tide receded farther, a few more common terns alighted on the sand spit while several others called their harsh *teeers* and uttered their shrill cries as they dashed through the air in rapid pursuit of the foremost bird which was bringing a shiner to one of the young.

Then several least terns came flying over. With their bills pointed downward, these delicate little sea

birds uttering their twittering cries, plunged into the water. Occasionally one would come up with a small fish, crosswise in its bill, whereupon it too became the victim of its jealous pursuing companions. Several white-foreheaded young of the common terns sat on the sand spit keeping up an incessant, beseeching chatter for food.

Some distance off-shore another small flock of excited common terns were flying over the water having discovered good feeding in the vicinity of a school of hungry blue fish.

The man, in the meantime, had been far from idle. Already half a bushel of small sandpipers, and a few yellow-legs, were lying out of the sun under the bow of the boat. A breeze now filled the sail and, loafing in the stern, he soon caught sight of the flying birds over the sand spit. Throwing the rudder hard over he brought the boat around. The sail filled. Close hauled, the light skiff heeled over and, with the water boiling behind its stern, moved on down the channel leading to the inlet.

Turning into the shallows, the man dropped the sail and let the boat float slowly along. As he tossed one of the dead yellow-legs high into the air, the inquisitive terns flew within gun-shot. Their shrill cries filled the intervals between shots as they hovered and circled over the floating gray and white bodies of their own dead. Then they dropped too.

Now and then a wounded bird cut the water in a vain attempt to arise as the boat floated past. Few were left except for distant scattered birds. Inexorably, the man went about gathering them into the boat. So as not to mar the plumage, the crushing pressure of his thumb and fingers on each side of the breast under the wings choked off the little pounding hearts of the wounded before they were dropped into the basket. As he reached under the bow to arrange for the stacking of the birds, a savage peck made him withdraw his hand quickly. A duck hawk which he had shot when it attacked a yellow-legs decoy, was not as he had presumed, dead.

Now it squatted under the ribs, a broken wing hanging by its side. Dragging it out, the man avoided the tearing claws and bill and dug his heel into the heart of the gasping bird. With a fierce look the hawk met the man's gaze until the familiar

sunlit skies through which it had hurled itself so expertly, went black.


Stacking the birds out of the sun, the man poled ashore, tied up his boat, and scooped a trench in the sand near the surf. He waited. Down beach a flock of sanderlings was busily feeding. As each foaming breaker came in, they dashed for higher sand. Sometimes, about to be engulfed, they flew lightly aside. In their playfulness they resembled children just out of school and lent an air of occupancy to the otherwise deserted shoreline. Two well directed shots lost them their game with the waves. A dozen or more little white bodies wilted into the backwash. The man set sail for home taking advantage of the breeze blowing in over the hot land and tied up at a skinning shed shortly before sundown—the end of a busy day.

* * *

Some fifty years later, the old man stood, with a younger companion, in the back of a skiff chumming for weakfish. From above and from all sides came the shrill cries of least and common terns as they eyed the shrimp hungrily. The old man, reminiscent of the time when he would speedily put an end to such "nonsense" with the business end of his shotgun, berated the birds noisily.

His younger companion remarked: "Times have changed and it's about time that you changed with them."

"Mebbe you're right, son," said the old man; then a soft light came into his eyes as he tossed a small spearing high into the air in the path of an approaching tern. The little "sea swallow," apparently accepting the truce, deftly picked it up as it fell. Then, crosswise in its bill, the bird carried it to a nearby, unmolested haven on the other side of a sandy windrow and thrust it into the open bill of one of its hungry young.



*An A.M. Book-
Length Feature*

At a Bend in a Mexican River

By Major George Miksch Sutton

With photographs by Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr. and Robert B. Lea

CHAPTER V.

One evening after a day of rain we were puzzled by a loud barking up-river. There were no dogs on the Rancho so far as we knew. Certainly Maclovio had none, and little Ramon's cousins never brought one with them when they came for a visit. The barking was quite distinct, however, so we surmised that a farmer must be driving cattle along the Gomez Farias trail, or that a celebration of some sort was going on at the local sugar mill. There was nothing so very remarkable about the sound. After all, this was Mexico. The Sabinas Valley probably was full of dogs.

By bedtime the barking had become noticeably louder. Listening carefully at the door, we decided that this was not because the night had grown quieter—indeed it was raining again—but because there were more dogs. There were fifteen or twenty of them by this time, in the same place as before. They weren't fighting amongst themselves—it wasn't that sort of disturbance—but were raising their voices against a common foe. My own belief was that only an organized hunt could explain such a hue and cry; but we heard no human voices. As we stretched out in bed our consciences were not easy. Since we had not learned what those dogs



were after, our day's work was not quite done.

After sleeping a bit I wakened with a start. A veritable tumult of barking filled the house. Half alarmed I sat up, spoke to Pettingill, and stepped quickly to the window to listen. The rain had stopped, but the night was thick and dark. The outcry was unbelievably ferocious. Peering out into the blackness I noted that the sound had not changed position in the slightest. Surely the dogs had put some large animal up a tree—perhaps a jaguar!

This was too much for me. Pulling on my damp clothes and fumbling about for gun and flashlight, I left the house. Come what may I would stay out until I had learned what those dogs were after.

I had gone several rods down the slippery path when the rain began again. To my surprise the downpour did not allay the barking in the least. Reaching the river, I noted that the sound came from the base of the foothill, considerably farther away than I had supposed. There was no light nor sound of human beings anywhere. The night was black, not a pleasant sort of night—even for dogs.

For dogs? I listened again. The barking was a good deal closer now, close enough for critical analysis. Something was wrong with it. There were too many high, querulous yips. It was too incessant. Dogs couldn't keep on barking that furiously and have breath or energy left for anything else. With a curious feeling that was half disappointment and half relief, I realized that this mad cacophony which had wakened me and lured me forth hadn't a thing to do

with dogs. There wasn't a dog, nor a jaguar, nor even a poor, scared opossum up a tree: the barking creatures were amphibians—every last one of them!

I was no true soldier of science that night. Instead of crossing the river, keeping on to the base of the foothill, and scrambling about until I had captured one of those vociferous creatures, I turned and walked back to the house. Pettingill and the boys were amused with my report. A trifle skeptical about the amphibians, we went to sleep.

The following evening I was at the base of the foothill at dusk, just as the rain began. Hardly had a dozen drops fallen when the "dogs" started. They yipped and yelped and belled all about me. So much alike were the sounds that several coming in quick succession created the weird effect of a tiny ghost terrier darting through the undergrowth. But the instant I started my search the animals grew silent. I was making too much noise. I had to wait fully ten minutes before they began barking again. Finally, by dint of long and careful stalking, I traced them to pools under and among the vine-covered rocks. They were frogs!

With the problem of the barking frogs settled we devoted our attention to other night sounds. Two of these did not puzzle us in the least—the low, rasping *gwee* or *whee* of the pauraque, and the sprightly *chip-willow* of the Salvin's whippoorwill. The pauraque occasionally visited us at dusk, alighting in the hard, clean-swept space between Maclovio's house and ours. What a wonderful creature it was, so soft-feathered, so airy of wing, so droll as it squatted in the doorway! The whippoorwill never came to the yard, but we often heard it off in the thicket. Both these birds belonged to the goatsucker tribe. We

Left: The ludicrous Mexican potoo is a large relative of the whippoorwill with a wing-spread of three feet or more. Their weird night calls were long a mystery to the expedition.

Painting by George M. Sutton



Expedition-man Bob Lea was a confirmed hunter of potoos. Opposite: Base camp near the river.

frequently located them at night by shining their eyes with a flashlight.

No phase of our work was more exciting than this hunting along the dark trails from ten o'clock to midnight. Our ears took eager note of every squeak and rustle. The shadows struck by the flashlight spun round us swiftly, creating an illusion of great activity in the brush as we walked forward. Who could tell at what instant these shadows would prove to be animate indeed—a snake slithering across the path, an eyra cat darting off into the *huipilla*, a ring-tailed cacomixtl watching us with front foot raised?

Occasionally a whippoorwill continued to sing with our spotlight fully upon it—opening its huge mouth and pumping its body vigorously as it hurled thirty, forty, fifty trembling phrases from the thicket. How eerie the performance was! The bird itself was not quite visible; there was no telling exactly where it was, which way it was facing, on what it was perched. But there in midair, somewhere amongst the tangle of vines and twigs and barbed wild pineapple leaves, a great, glowing, pinkish-orange eye shouted *chip-willow! chip-willow! chip-willow!* at us. Now it moved a bit, suddenly went out, suddenly came on again. How it shone, almost with an illusion of whirling at the periphery! It was like a live, perfectly round coal, or the burning end of a stub fanned to brightness by a breeze we could not feel. It was, technically speaking, the *tapetum lucidum*, or “shining carpet” of the eye’s chorioid layer, throwing the rays of our flashlight back at us. We never failed to marvel at the phenomenon, to exclaim over its startling beauty.

The pauraque and whippoorwill were our old friends; we knew their language well. But many of these

nocturnal words and phrases we did not recognize. There was, for example, a solemn, throaty *boob, boob, boob, boob, boob* which came from the dark woods up-river, and which had an exasperating way of stopping shortly after we had started in pursuit. We usually heard it about the time we were finishing the day's note-writing. It would drift in through the screen, so faint at first as to seem a mere throbbing of the temples, become louder by the third or fourth repetition, then die suddenly away. It was muffled and mysterious, like the night out beyond the borders of the yard. It suggested a vaguely unpleasant creature in a dark bag, writhing, struggling to rise, standing for an instant, then sinking exhausted.

As we listened we put down our pens, stared at the table, then looked at each other, as if shifting the responsibility. "Well, you heard it, didn't you?" those looks seemed to say. "Whatever the critter is, it's yours as much as mine. You know your way around here as well as I do. Why don't you go on out and get it?" So someone would stand up, take a gun from the corner, and quietly leave the house while the rest of us remained, listening intently.

Often the thing stopped crying within a moment or so, exactly as if it had had its eye on us all the while; but occasionally it continued for half an hour and we would sit there in a torture of suspense, waiting for the sound of the gun. Finally, giving up hope, we would begin conversing or writing our notes again, and the puzzled, disappointed huntsman would return, crawling with a fresh crop of ticks.

Weeks passed before we learned that these mysterious "boob boobs" were wood owls. They spent the day standing straight and motionless, with eyes closed, in a thick tangle of



vines, and came out after dark to hunt mice along the trails and edges of old fields. They were about the size of barn owls. Their large, deep brown eyes glowed faintly red when "shined" with a flashlight.

Squawks which exploded over the house at night were, we felt sure, the cries of flying herons. But on windless evenings we sometimes heard a hoarse, resonant bellowing so unearthly, indeed so incredible, as to give us the feeling that we might be having a nightmare. It was a genuinely terrifying sound, like the bawling of an angry bear: but no breaking of brush accompanied it, and the fact that it came from the thicket rather than from the river meant that it could not be from an alligator. It was followed, as a rule, by moans, croaks and guffaws so varied as to call to mind a half dozen wholly unrelated creatures in fiendish conclave. These sounds more than bewildered us. They made us feel miserably incompetent. How *could* reptiles or batrachians or mammals capable of producing such cries inhabit the valley without our seeing them occasionally?

All this bellowing, moaning, croaking and guffawing was done by one species of bird, the potoo—a big distant cousin of the whippoorwill. The potoo had a wing-spread of over three feet, was speckled gray and brown all over, had owl-like yellow eyes and cavernous mouth, and was another of those distinctly tropical species which lived at the Rancho but not at Victoria. It spent the daylight hours

asleep, clinging to a branch or stump with bill, head, body, folded wings and tail in a straight line, looking like a dead stick. The first one I ever saw I almost grasped for support as I was making my way up a steep slope. The gray stub flopped off and sailed swiftly down the declivity, leaving me snatching at thin air. What a bird!

At night the potoos flew about the more open part of the woodlands. Occasionally I saw one circling just below the tree-tops or alighting on a prominent stub. Never did it appear to be alarmed or in a hurry. Its eyes, which were extremely large, caught the rays of the upturned flashlight and glowed like white-hot discs against the sky. It was on the lookout for a big beetle or moth, but I should not have been surprised to see it swoop out, snatch up a bat, and gulp down the fluttering creature, wings and all!

Bob Lea became a confirmed hunter of potoos. Something about the uncouth, frog-faced creatures appealed to him. All he needed was a single, long-drawn-out *baw* from one of them and off he would go, sometimes straight through the savage *huipilla*, after his bird. He might be gone an hour or more, and he might come back empty-handed, but his enthusiasm never waned.

Bob was, we decided, a nocturnal animal at heart. I'm sure he liked being alone out in the night-wilderness of thorns and nettles, coarse leaves and matted vines. There, looking up at that rare phenomenon, the full Rancho moon, he was in complete command. He could think of loved ones if he chose, or wonder about the underlying causes of the vile weather we had been having, or, casting scientific problems aside, simply stand there drinking it all in, admiring, worshipping. At the house, on his

return, he would give us an account of his adventures as he picked off ticks, pulled out thorns and dabbed iodine on the worst of his scratches. "The good old pants can stand just about one more trip like that," he would say. But we knew from the tone of his voice that he was thinking not of pants, nor of us, nor of the scratches and tick-bites, but of that ineffable moment an hour or so back, when, looking at the cloud with its bright edge, he had felt himself and the big black sierra and the twig-lace above him and the whole vast sky beyond and the millions of leaves and spines about him and the soft earth underneath his feet all merging and flowing together and becoming one . . .

Bob and I went hunting one night—he along the river-bank, I on the foothill. I was trying out a powerful electric headlamp we had brought along. Either because the elastic band was too tight or because I had been taking too much quinine, I developed a headache. The hunting didn't go very well for either of us, so Bob returned to the swimming hole for a bath about the time I started down the slope. As I approached the dead-tree bridge Bob swam silently downstream, intent on giving me a surprise. Keeping the headlamp on because I wished to learn how to use it, I started across the bridge. I found it a bit hard to keep my footing, but did very well and was almost across when a sound of splashing directly underneath me attracted my attention. Forgetting everything but the possibility that this noise might mean a duck or cormorant or even an otter, I did my best to direct the beam of light straight downward, lost my balance completely, fell off, and landed with a terrific splash virtually on top of Bob. It would be hard to say which of us was the more surprised.

(To be continued)

Gilbert White

By Edwin Way Teale

His long and lasting fame rests
on a single volume.

GILBERT WHITE wrote a classic of English literature without even knowing he was producing a book. *The Natural History of Selborne* consists of letters written to friends about the birds, the mammals, the insects, the weather, the plants of his Hampshire parish. It was a book that wasn't intended for publication; a book that appeared only forty-odd months before the author's death. Yet this quiet record of small adventures in the often-overlooked realm of ordinary nature stands with Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler* to provide the English language with its greatest classics of nature writing.

Fifty miles to the south and west of London, in the Hampshire village of Selborne, the quiet life of this quiet man came to its end a century and a half ago. At the age of seventy-two, Gilbert White died in the village where he was born. During most of those seven decades, he spent his spare hours rambling about the pleasant countryside, among the beeches of a hilltop grove, beneath a great yew-tree's shade. The important events of his day were such things as the return of the swallows, the travels of a Sussex turtle, the annual nesting of the daws. When he was nearing seventy, his only book, a record of his observations in and around Selborne, appeared from the press. The fame of Gilbert White—"a long and lasting

fame"—rests on this single volume.

This book of the Selborne naturalist has been read in many languages by millions of people. It has appeared in more than a hundred different editions. Twenty-eight editions rest on the shelves of the New York Public Library alone. No collection of English classics is complete without White's book. For one hundred and fifty years, new readers have been discovering the unassuming charm and sincerity of *Selborne*. For a century and a half, Gilbert White's uneventful life has interested the world.

That life, which flowed along as placidly as a lowland-country stream, had its beginnings at the vicarage in Selborne. Here, on the 18th of July in the year 1720, Gilbert White was born. He was the eldest of a family of eleven children. His father, John White, was a barrister and his mother was the daughter of a churchman of considerable means. His grandfather, for whom he was named and in whose house he was born, was then the vicar of Selborne.

After completing his education at Basingstoke grammar school and at Oriel College, Oxford, Gilbert White became curate to his uncle at Swarrraton, not far from Selborne. His salary was about \$100 a year. Later, it was increased to \$125 when he became curate-in-charge at Selborne. From then on, his life-story, as recorded in some *Who's Who*, would fill but a couple of lines.

He never married. His inherited income enabled him to live in quiet comfort. He is described as a pleasant little man, "brisk in manner, kindly in speech, getting on well with his neighbors." Frequently he is referred to as "a country vicar." In truth, he never rose to that position. He seemed devoid of worldly ambition and remained a curate until his death. Nobody knows what Gilbert White

looked like; there is no authentic portrait in existence. In 1763, White became the owner of "*The Wakes*" and here he spent the last thirty years of his life.

There were, during the placid years of Gilbert White's life-span, stirring events in the great world beyond the hilltops of his Hampshire parish. The American Revolution was fought and won; the Machine Age was coming into being; the French Revolution had begun. These events were infinitely remote from Selborne. Their farthest ripples hardly touched the life of its curate. No single word of all these history-making occurrences can be found in White's volume. He was, as one writer puts it, one of the most restful figures in a restless and artificial Eighteenth Century.

His book is called the first volume which raised natural history into the region of literature. It founded a whole new school of nature writing. Its author was, and still is, the patron saint of the amateur naturalist. In his studies of the living world, Gilbert White's aim was essentially modern—complete accuracy through personal observation. He goes more often to Nature's book than to the books of men. There is the freshness of the out-of-doors in his pages. Humanity is a part of nature in *The Natural History of Selborne*; White's book concerns people as well as wildlife. And all is seen through the eyes of an observant, thoughtful, kindly man.

"The old Sussex turtle that I have mentioned to you so often," he wrote to one of his friends in the year 1780, "is become my property. When I turned it out on a border, it walked twice to the bottom of my garden; however, in the evening, the weather being cold, it buried itself in the loose mould, and continues so concealed. When one reflects on the state of this strange being, it is a matter of

wonder to find that Providence should bestow such a profusion of days, such a seeming waste of longevity, on a reptile that appears to relish it so little as to squander more than two-thirds of its existence in a joyless stupor, and be lost to all sensation for months together in the profoundest of slumbers."

The qualities of White's literary style and the characteristics of his mind are well illustrated in the famous passage on The Raven Tree. It appears in the second letter to be reproduced in his book.

"On the Blackmoor estate there is a small wood. . . . In the center of this grove there stood an oak, which, though shapely and tall on the whole, bulged out into a large excrescence about the middle of the stem. On this a pair of ravens had fixed their residence for such a series of years that the oak was distinguished by the title of The Raven Tree. Many were the attempts of the neighboring youths to get at this eyry. But when they arrived at the swelling, it jutted out so in their way, and was so far beyond their grasp, that the most daring lads were awed, and acknowledged the undertaking to be too hazardous; so the ravens built on, nest upon nest, in perfect security till the fatal day arrived in which the wood was to be leveled. It was in the month of February, when these birds usually sit. The saw was applied to the butt, the wedges were inserted in the opening, the woods echoed to the heavy blow of the beetle or mall or mallet, the tree nodded to its fall; but still the dam sat on. At last, when it gave way, the bird was flung from her nest; and, although her parental affection deserved a better fate, was whipped down by the twigs, which brought her dead to the ground."

Samuel Johnson, the great pundit of Gilbert White's time, reflected the

consensus of opinion when he declared to Boswell: "Swallows certainly sleep all winter. A number of them conglobulate together, by flying round and round, and then all in a heap throw themselves under water, and lie in the bed of a river." Although this was the accepted belief of eminent scientists of his day, Gilbert White considered the mystery of the annual disappearance of the swallows as a thing unsolved. He accepted no fine-sounding explanation without examining its credentials. And he sought proof for his own hypotheses in the open fields.

Probably the outstanding events in the life of Gilbert White were his chance meetings with two noted naturalists of the time—Thomas Pennant, whose *British Zoology* remained a source-book for more than half a century, and Daines Barrington, a London lawyer, amateur naturalist, member of the Royal Society and pioneer in promoting Arctic exploration. It is believed that he met both men in the bookshop of his brother Benjamin, then a bookseller and publisher of scientific works in the British capital. His place of business was a rendezvous for men of scientific pursuits. It was the meetings with Pennant and Barrington, and the correspondence which ensued, that laid the foundations for *The Natural History of Selborne*.

Just as Henry Thoreau's celebrated *Journals* probably resulted from the encouragement of Ralph Waldo Emerson, so Gilbert White's *Selborne* came into being through the original stimulation of Thomas Pennant. Pennant was White's Emerson. He started him recording in letters the rich harvest of his inquiring mind and of his observing eye. The curate began corresponding with the scientist in the summer of 1767. The first of his letters to Barrington came two years

later. The bulk of Gilbert White's book consists of letters addressed to these two friends. Thus the personal charm of his paragraphs was unspoiled by self-consciousness. They were written with no idea that the author was addressing generations yet unborn.

It is probable that the distinguished Pennant failed entirely to appreciate the literary quality of the letters he received. He was the scientist intent on gleaning new facts for use in revisions of his *British Zoology*. It was Daines Barrington who first appreciated White's easy, simple, graceful style. He saw in the Selborne naturalist, before anyone else did, a writer of individual stature. It was Barrington who suggested that the letters be published as a book.

John White, another brother of the curate, was also a clergyman, also an amateur naturalist, and also the author of a volume of observations made in the field. While stationed at Gibraltar, he corresponded with Carl Linnaeus and other leading scientists of the day. The results of his studies were embodied in a *Natural History of Gibraltar*. Both the author and the book are unknown to fame. The volume was never published and the manuscript was lost. Had it been printed, it might have proved an important contribution to the science of the Eighteenth Century. Gilbert White, however, was more fortunate. His book, published in 1789 by his brother, Benjamin, appeared in the fashionable quarto size. It was favorably received from the first and its reputation has grown with the years. Yet, no more unassuming volume ever attained the stature of a classic.

It is the personality of the author that makes the book. The subjects may be commonplace, but they are illuminated by the light of his intense enthusiasm. It is most often the unusual, the interesting fact that he

remembers. His book is no dry-as-dust cataloguing of everything seen. He remembers such things as the cats that ran ahead of the gunner like hunting dogs, the feeble-minded boy who spent his summer days pursuing and catching bees, the day of the green rain when aphides fell on Selborne from the sky. When he speaks of birds' nests, it frequently is in some such vein as this:

"A certain swallow built for two years together on the handles of a pair of garden shears, that were stuck up against the boards in an outhouse, and therefore must have her nest spoiled whenever that implement was wanted; and, what is stranger still, another bird of the same species built its nest on the wings and body of an owl that happened by accident to hang dead and dry from the rafter of a barn. This owl, with the nest on its wings, and with eggs in the nest, was brought as a curiosity worthy of the most elegant private museum in Great Britain. The owner, struck with the oddity of the sight, furnished the bringer with a large shell, or conch, desiring him to fix it just where the owl hung; the person did as he was ordered, and the following year a pair, probably the same pair, built their nest in the conch, and laid their eggs."

Life's Indian Summer had passed for Gilbert White before his lone volume came from the press. Like Izaak Walton—who also was a man of one book which appeared late in his life—he had made a recreation of a recreation, he had written not for money but for pleasure. He was fortunate, just as Thoreau was fortunate, in the name of his surroundings. Both "Selborne" and "Walden" are words of dignity and beauty.

The author of *The Natural History of Selborne* was active until a few days before his death. In his careful

and legible handwriting, there appears, for May 31, 1793, the following entry in the Selborne burial register: "Widow Bailey, a pauper." Ten days later, he made another and final entry: "Mary Burbey, aged 16." There follows, in the handwriting of the Reverend Christopher Taylor, the rector, the simple burial notice of White himself. He died on June 26, 1793 and was buried in the Selborne graveyard not far from the great yew tree he had seen so often. The tombstone over White's grave is as simple and unassuming as his life had been. The marker bears only this inscription: "G.W. 26th June, 1793."

Thomas Carlyle once asked: "What make ye of Parson White in Selborne?" And men have been echoing that query through succeeding years. Why, as John Burroughs once shaped the question, has his "cockle-shell of a book ridden so safely and buoyantly upon the waves beneath which so many learned and elaborate treatises have sunk?" Burroughs' answer is: "He did not try to read his own thoughts into nature but submitted his mind to her with absolute frankness and ingenuousness." And Carlyle adds: "His *The Natural History of Selborne* has copied a little sentence or two faithfully from the inspired volume of Nature."

Both the Everyman's Library, published by E. P. Dutton at ninety cents, and the World's Classics, published by Oxford University Press at eighty cents, include *The Natural History of Selborne*. A photographic edition, issued some years ago at three dollars by Robert M. McBride, contains excellent photographs made at Selborne by the Kearton brothers. In almost any second-hand bookstore, de luxe editions of White's book can be obtained for less than five dollars. Many of them are illustrated with charming woodcuts.

THE PRESIDENT'S

Report to You



New Florida Wildlife Refuge of upwards of a million acres • Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary land exchange • Foxes and Pheasants • Screen Tour Cities out West

NOWHERE in this country do there exist more spectacular concentrations of wildlife or luxuriant and fascinating vegetation than in semi-tropical southwest Florida. For fifteen years there has been agitation favoring the establishment of an Everglades National Park. Many organizations and individuals have participated in this movement with the result that there has been a growing demand in Florida for state action to make such a park possible, and Governor Spessard Holland pledged in his platform four years ago his best efforts to set up the park during his administration. Of the various organizations and individuals that have boosted the park idea in southwest Florida, none has been more active than the Everglades National Park Association and its indefatigable Director, Ernest F. Coe.

Your Society has been a participant from inception in conferences and negotiations designed to forward the establishment of either a park or a refuge in this area so important to the preservation of unique fauna and flora.

It is good news to be able to report that at a meeting in Tallahassee in December official action was taken by the State of Florida, and subsequently confirmed at later meetings of the

Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, to deed to the United States some 400,000 acres of mainland and some 450,000 acres of submerged land and keys; this in order that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service may promptly inaugurate protective patrols for the conservation of wildlife and other natural resources within this vast acreage.

BY-PASSING THE STUMBLING BLOCK

For years there had been an impasse occasioned by the question of mineral rights. Quite naturally the state and private landowners were, in view of current excitement as to oil possibilities, desirous of retaining those rights. Very properly the National Park Service, in line with its policy standards, took the position that it would not accept title to the land and assume responsibility for its administration if mineral rights were to be reserved by the state and private landowners, with all the possibilities of commercial operations within the park boundaries. Therefore, an alternative plan was evolved whereby title might be transferred to the federal government, but administration assumed by the Fish and Wildlife Service rather than the National Park Service, with the understanding that it would be the intention to establish an Everglades Nation-



SPESSARD L. HOLLAND
Governor



C. RAY VINTEN
National Park Service



IRA N. GABRIELSON
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

PARTICIPANTS IN THE TALLAHASSEE MEETING OF DECEMBER 13, 1944 TO

al Park at a future date if it then seemed desirable. In such case the Fish and Wildlife Service would have done an interim policing job.

LEGISLATION OBTAINED

A bill was therefore introduced in Congress last fall by Florida's Representative J. Hardin Peterson, Chairman of the House Public Lands Committee, amending existing federal legislation authorizing establishment of an Everglades National Park. Senator Andrews of Florida sponsored the Peterson bill in the Senate. Favorable action was taken in both Houses and the President signed the bill just prior to the meeting in Tallahassee in mid-December.

This federal amendment permits the United States to accept less than the entire originally proposed park area, enables it to take title in spite of reservation of mineral rights by the state and private landowners and authorizes the lodging of administrative responsibility in such federal agency as the Secretary of the Interior may designate. It also provides for reversion of title to the State if an Everglades National Park be not established within ten years. Such provisions were essential if the recent

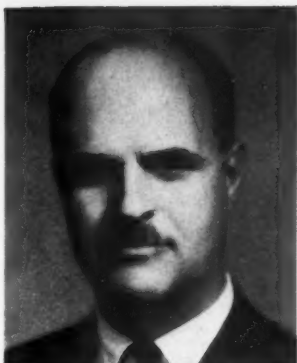
negotiations were to be successfully concluded.

HATS OFF TO GOVERNOR HOLLAND

Throughout the negotiations Governor Holland of Florida demonstrated keen personal interest and great skill in bringing matters to a happy conclusion. To him should go the major credit for the setting up at this time of wildlife refuge of some 850,000 acres of Florida lands and waters, with reasonable promise of eventual establishment of a national park. Governor Millard F. Caldwell, who took office January 1, of this year, also participated in the December meeting in Tallahassee, favors the plans and has asked former Governor Holland to aid him in assuring their successful consummation.

GETTING OUR BEARINGS

Just where do these lands and waters lie? Generally speaking, there are three main sections. One of these is all of Florida Bay between the mainland and the intracoastal channel, which lies just on the inside of the main line of keys leading from Barnes Sound to the west end of Lower Matecumbe. This part of the refuge measures roughly forty miles in length



JOHN H. BAKER
National Audubon Society



ERNEST F. COE
Everglades National Park Assn.



MILLARD F. CALDWELL
Governor-elect

44 TO DETERMINE A PARK-REFUGE SETUP FOR SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

from northeast to southwest, has an average width of approximately sixteen miles and contains roughly 400,000 acres. Although there are some privately owned keys within these limits, the vast bulk of the area constitutes state lands and waters.

It is the home of probably more than half of the North American population of great white herons—the rest occupying keys farther west in the direction of Key West and out to the Marquesas. It contains the only present and recent nesting colonies of roseate spoonbills in Florida—in essence one colony, splitting up to nest on three nearby keys. It contains all, in so far as we know, of the reddish egrets which, given protection, have returned in recent years to Florida as a resident species.

It contains most of the American crocodiles remaining on this continent. It abounds with fish and marine organisms of infinite variety, with much tropical vegetation and with a host of other birds more commonly met with, such as brown pelicans, Florida cormorants, egrets, ibis, many herons, ospreys and eagles. It furnishes winter feeding grounds for shorebirds and ducks. To some of its keys come annually to nest the white-

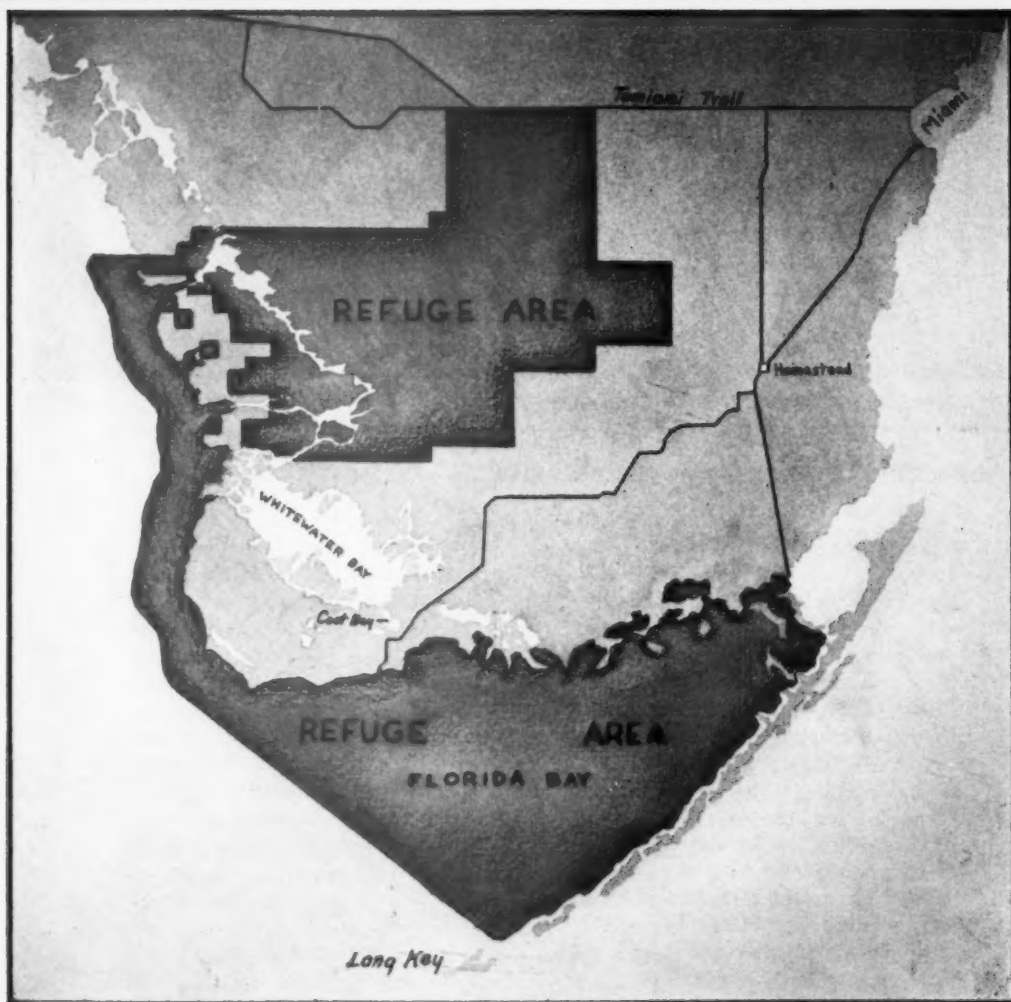
crowned pigeon, so decimated in numbers and in need of protection.

The second section is a 34-mile-long strip of water, three miles wide, offshore from Cape Sable to just north of Lostman's River. This, relatively speaking, is not an important wildlife conservation area except from the standpoint of fish, marine organisms and subsurface vegetation.

THE HEART OF THE REFUGE

The third section includes some 400,000 acres of mainland stretching eastward, generally speaking, from the mouth of the Shark River on the south and the mouth of Lostman's River on the north to Royal Palm State Park at the east, and in a belt eleven miles wide northward to a front on the Tamiami Trail close to what is known as "Forty Mile Bend."

Known facts as to rock structure, water and soil conditions in this area reveal that these lands have no potential agricultural value, but are useful for water control and wildlife refuge purposes. The natural drainage of the glades swings southwestward across the eastern portion of the Tamiami Trail down to the heads of the great rivers, such as the Shark, Harney, Broad and Lostman's, on the southwest coast. An important section of the Everglades



The boundaries above are not exact but will give you an idea of the location and size of the area involved in the new Florida Refuge.

with its characteristic vegetation, is included in this mainland area, as are also the full courses of the rivers mentioned and the extensive mangrove tidal marsh through which they run to the Gulf of Mexico.

Within the boundaries of this tract have annually congregated from time immemorial hundreds of thousands of egrets, herons, and ibises to nest in great rookeries and gather in great roosts. Here are alligators, not crocodiles, and throughout both this and

the bay areas are to be found a few manatees, or sea cows. Deer, raccoon and bobcats are plentiful and a few panthers are still to be found.

PRIVATE LANDS

Between the two principal tracts in the refuge lies a great block of privately owned land, fortunately largely in one ownership, which might be generally referred to as the Cape Sable and Whitewater Bay country. These lands were included in the proposed

park as originally set up on paper, and it is understood that the private owners are prepared to follow the state's lead by turning over their lands to the federal government for incorporation in the refuge.

REINFORCEMENTS ARE COMING UP!

Your Society has maintained warden service throughout much of southwest Florida, including Florida Bay, for upwards of forty-five years, with increasing and steady coverage in the past ten, made possible by contributions to the Sanctuary Fund. Yours has been, it seems safe to say, the only agency which has made serious efforts to protect non-game species of wildlife there through that entire period.

Under the protection afforded by your Society many species of wildlife, constituting a principal attraction of the proposed park and the major reason for the present establishment of a refuge, have increased notably in numbers. Your Society has stood in the breach and held the fort until such time—the present—as the federal and state governments were prepared to assume protective responsibility on a proper basis. You are entitled to satisfaction at this accomplishment.

It is not the purpose of your Society to seek permanent responsibility for wildlife protective patrols where needed. That would seem to be properly the function of the federal and state governments, but it is necessary at many times and in many places that your Society or some other conservation agency step in and do the necessary job, because for one reason or other the federal and state governments are not prepared to act. Your Society's function, then, is one of furnishing protection in an emergency and promoting the establishment of federal and state responsibility. Then we can move on to another spot

A LETTER FROM GOVERNOR SPESSARD L. HOLLAND WRITTEN JAN. 1, 1945

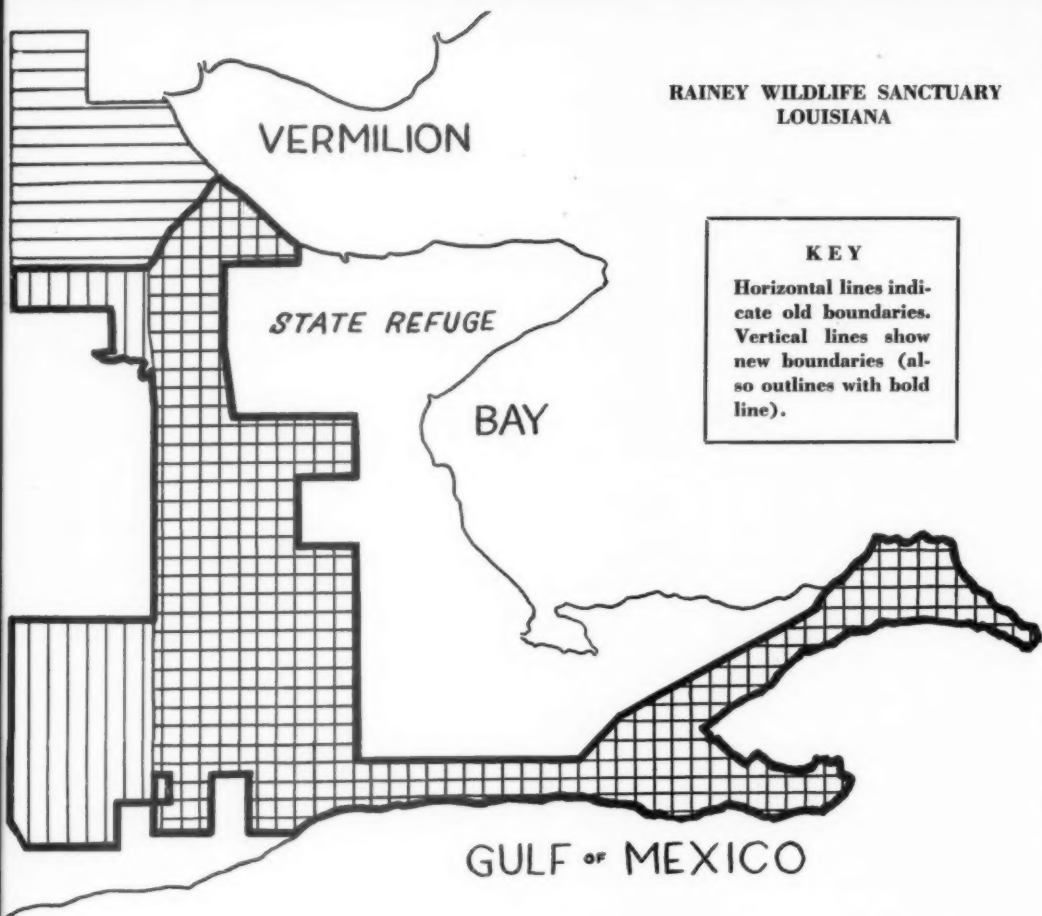
"May I take this occasion to thank you warmly for your own active and effective interest and participation in this long drawn out matter. Of course the protection which you and your Society have given to rookeries, etc. has been of tremendous value, but apart from that your following up the whole situation so closely and bringing together the State and Federal officials in such a way as to bring about the passage of the recent federal amendment and the subsequent execution of the papers above mentioned has been the largest contributing factor to the reaching of the results above recited. I am deeply indebted to you and your organization and in expressing my own gratitude I would like to thank you on behalf of the State and all lovers of nature in Florida and elsewhere."

where immediate action and comparable promotion may be sorely needed.

OUR WARDENS STILL THE VANGUARD

However, our wardens are not soon to leave Florida Bay or any of the regions of the new refuge. It will take time for the Fish and Wildlife Service, especially under present war conditions, to find and install equipment and men to properly patrol the entire area. We have agreed, at the request of the Fish and Wildlife Service, to continue the present warden patrols until such time as the Service is prepared to take over. We have also agreed at its request to resume, after the war, organized boat and station wagon tours, as the Service does not plan to carry on activities of that kind.

Moreover, as long as substantial acreage of private lands, such as in



the Cape Sable, Whitewater Bay, Cuthbert Lake areas remain outside of the federal refuge, your Society's duty to patrol those lands and waters will continue, in accordance with responsibility lodged in us by the private owners. When and if the federal government eventually acquires all such private lands, makes them a part of the refuge or park and has found and provided equipment and men to adequately patrol, your Society's wardens will be allocated to other areas where their activities are needed and further promotional public relations work can be profitably undertaken.

It is not every day in the week

that a new wildlife refuge of upwards of a million acres is established!

RAINEY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Those members who have visited the Society's Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary in Louisiana know full well its extraordinary shape, and the long patrol distances involved. From the northwestern to the southeastern end it is over twenty miles. Lands of Mr. E. A. McIlhenny border the Sanctuary on the west, and those of the State Wildlife Refuge on the east. Now, all of the lands within the Sanctuary are not equally good for wildlife sanctuary purposes, and some of the least desirable, from the standpoint of pro-

tection of wild waterfowl, stated in the act of donation of the property to be a primary purpose, lie in the northwestern sections farthest inland from the Gulf.

EXCHANGE OF LANDS

Mr. McIlhenny and your Society recently arrived at an agreement for an exchange of lands involving some 5,000 acres in the northwestern section of the Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary, title to which the Society grants to Mr. McIlhenny, and some 5,000 acres of his lands farther south and adjacent to the Sanctuary, title to which he grants to the Society. On these lands of Mr. McIlhenny's that come to the Society are some of the best duck ponds in that part of the coastal marshes of Louisiana. These were his favorite duck hunting ponds in the days when he and his friends went more frequently to this portion of his lands to shoot.

On others of these lands of Mr. McIlhenny's that come to the Society congregate annually large numbers of geese. The geese generally prefer to use sections of land not far inland from the Gulf. Recently there have been more geese on the Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary lands than at any time since the Society received the property in 1924. This mass of geese has been simultaneously using some six square miles of land of Mr. McIlhenny's that come to the Society in this exchange.

Through this exchange, in the opinion of your directors, the purposes of the Sanctuary, as set forth in the act of donation by Mrs. Grace Rainey Rogers, are furthered. Effective patrols will be facilitated through reduction of distances, and the costs will be less. The shape of the Sanctuary becomes more compact, although still retaining a leg eastward to Southwest Pass, more or less resembling

Italy as it sticks into the Mediterranean.

MINERAL RIGHTS

As regards mineral rights, always a potentially important factor in any land transactions in Louisiana today, the agreement provides for retention by each present owner of 50 per cent of those mineral rights, but with the exception that, because of recent developments in connection with mineral lease with which certain of the sections that come to the Society are burdened, Mr. McIlhenny retains full mineral rights to four sections of land, and the Society likewise retains full mineral rights on four other sections of land, title to which it grants to Mr. McIlhenny. Reservations of mineral rights under Louisiana law terminate if no use is made thereof for a period of ten consecutive years.

CANALS

There are numerous canals on the lands that the Society receives, and the agreement provides that title to these canals and the land under them vests solely in the Society, although Mr. McIlhenny agrees to meet one-half of the maintenance cost of certain of those canals, the use of which will be permitted him or his representatives in travelling to and from other lands of his.

REVERSION OF TITLE

Under the terms of the act of donation Mrs. Rogers' heir, Mrs. Bertha Rainey Plum, has a reversionary interest and by reason thereof is entitled to a share in any proceeds of mineral rights. She is, therefore, a participant in the present agreement and thereby approves of, and consents to, all particulars of the land exchange.

IMPORTANT STEP

This agreement provides for an im-

portant step forward in improvement of the character of the Paul J. Rainey Wildlife Sanctuary, and we appreciate the cooperation of Mr. E. A. McIlhenny in making this possible. We shall hope that this is but the first step toward eventual consolidation of our ownership in one compact area containing the best of the duck and goose wintering grounds in that part of coastal Louisiana.

HUNTSMAN—SPARE THAT SHOREBIRD!

Audubon wardens are not just game wardens under private sponsorship. They are interpreters of wildlife and teachers of conservation to the people. Their principal aim is not to make an arrest, but to instill an idea. Yet when the situation demands it, our wardens are firm and invoke the law.

Recently, John Northwood, while patrolling near Worm Cove in the Okeechobee region, spied two men with guns about 200 yards north of the Lakeport road. He watched them through his glasses, noting the shorebirds that fell when the men fired into the flock. When he advanced within speaking distance, the men said they were shooting at ducks but with no luck.

"I told them that I had watched them shooting into the flock of shorebirds," Northwood writes. "They denied this, and I said I was going to walk back and pick up the dead birds for evidence. I picked up 17 birds in all—the majority were dowitchers, one was a red-backed sandpiper and one a lesser yellow-legs. Many other birds were floating on the water, belly up, some dead on the shore and some running about wounded."

Mr. Northwood then reported this incident to the state and federal authorities who took prompt steps to file charges. J. V. Kelsey, U. S. Game Management Agent, in a letter to us

about this situation, makes the following comment:

"May I take this opportunity of congratulating you upon having in your service a man of the type of Mr. Northwood. He has guts, initiative, ability and intelligence—the qualities that go into the making of a competent law enforcement officer. Employees of this type add much to the prestige of your organization."

FOXES AND PHEASANTS

The furor over foxes, the arguing over whether or not to put a bounty on them, and the attributing to them of almost every shortage of upland game birds proceeds apace throughout much of the eastern part of the nation. In evidence thereof, a recent news item tells us that the New Jersey Fish and Game Commission includes in its program the hiring of professional hunters and trappers to devote their entire time to destroying foxes, weasels, skunks and other animals considered harmful to game. It adds that the Commission maintains that the present number of predators dooms any stocking program to failure.

It is, therefore, particularly pleasing to note that at a recent meeting of the New York State Conservation Council, representing a group of fish and game clubs and sportsmen's associations, the speakers on a special panel to discuss this topic concluded that fox bounties are an expensive and ineffective pheasant conservation measure.

They stressed their belief that abundance of foxes is not responsible for the present pheasant shortage in New York State, that bounty laws, no matter how carefully drawn, open the way to fraud through use of animals taken in one area to collect bounties in another, and that a major part of bounty appropriations is often ab-



National Park Service

JACKSON HOLE

It is filled with red herrings.

sorbed by animals that would have been taken anyhow. While this reasoning does not explain why the fox abundance is not responsible for the pheasant shortage — reasoning that would be helpful to thinking as to why abundance of predators is not responsible for shortages of game birds or animals on which they prey—the action taken by the Council demonstrates that the members of this sportsmen's organization were willing to face and consider the facts, unruffled by the prevailing hysteria.

GO WEST, YOUNG MAN!

Wayne Short, dynamo of the Audubon Wildlife Screen Tours, went

West a few months ago and the six-page, single-spaced memorandum report of his trip can be summed up in six words: *I came, I saw, I conquered!*

Out of the seventeen prospective sponsors to which Wayne offered a series of five moving-picture lectures, he convinced all but two of the desirability of the program. In most cities, the series was welcomed enthusiastically, since the sponsoring organizations were on the look-out for nature material.

Concluding arrangements are still to be worked out in some cases, but at this writing we can announce that Denver, Salt Lake City, Seattle, San

Jose, San Francisco, Berkeley, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles will be Screen Tour Cities during the 1945-6 season. As Wayne has said in his summing up paragraph, "It surely seems that Audubon Wildlife Screen Tours have spread a considerable distance westward."

ADDITIONS TO OUR STAFF

Probably no more talented battery of nature photographers could be assembled than Dr. Eliot F. Porter of Winnetka, Illinois, Samuel A. Grimes of Jacksonville, Florida, and our own Allan D. Cruickshank, who, as you know, has been for upwards of a year in active military service in England. You will be pleased to know that both Porter and Grimes have now joined the staff of the Society as official photographers. Both of these men are outstanding in the quality of their still pictures, both in kodachrome and black and white.

Dr. Porter's photographs of birds in color have been widely exhibited, including special display a year or more ago at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. He will continue to reside in Illinois, but will devote a certain part of each year to the taking of nature pictures for your Society. Grimes will headquarter at New York, but be on the road most of the time taking still and motion pictures in accordance with the program laid out by your Society; he leaves his position as the manager of the engraving plant of the Florida Times-Union.

Through the addition of these two men to the staff there is every promise that there will be greater opportunity to reproduce the finest of color pictures in *Audubon Magazine*, and perhaps in other publications of the Society; to build up a representative collection of 2 x 2 kodachrome slides for which there is

an ever-widening demand for use in schools; also to make available for sale and for our own use a file of glossy black and white prints of diversified nature subjects. One of the results of these fortunate arrangements should be to make your Society the logical place for newspaper, magazine and book publishers to turn to obtain the rights to reproduce the best available wildlife photographs.

JACKSON HOLE

Although the controversy over the proposed abolition of the Jackson Hole National Monument some time since ceased to have more than rather remote connection with conservation issues, and had resolved itself, at least temporarily, into one over states' rights, taxation and "government by executive order," it is encouraging to be able to advise that the President of the United States withheld his approval from H. R. 2241, the so-called Barrett bill, which had been passed by both Houses of Congress in December, and which would have abolished this Monument. The President's message, printed in full in many newspapers, summed up the situation convincingly, but did not add information that was not already on record. Doubtless there will be a further effort by Congress in 1945 in the direction of abolishing this Monument or tinkering with the provisions of the Antiquities Act of 1906, under terms of which national monuments have since that date been set up.

It would be helpful in minimizing the controversy if Congress were to act favorably upon the proposed legislation, approved of by the Administration, which provides that revenues derived by the federal government from the National Park and Monument System might be used, on an equitable basis, to offset any tax losses to counties.

The Changing Seasons

By Ludlow Griscom



IT IS rarely possible to give any general summary of weather conditions, which applies to more than one section of the country. This fall, however, the temperatures were normal to mild over the entire country, and winter made a relatively belated appearance in all the more northern states. In northern California in addition, abundant rains produced fresh vegetation, a good fruit crop and a correspondingly good season for land birds.

The land-bird migration was good in those sections of the East where marked cool waves occurred, uneventful elsewhere. Observers in eastern New England and Minnesota fared well, and an early cool spell on October 13 brought a great wave of small song birds to western Florida. These conditions are of importance only in that they are favorable to the observer; they prove nothing as regards the increase or decrease of the birds concerned.

The hazards of war and the reduction of observers make regional reporting more and more uneven these days. One area has more coast line closed for defense reasons than another; one section will have lost a higher percentage of observers than another. This inevitably produces contradictory and paradoxical reports, which if interpreted too literally, would lead to absurd ornithological generalizations. Three illustrations are at hand.

The first concerns the fate of the southern hurricane blown vagrants to the north Atlantic states after September 20. All the great rarities disappeared and were never reported again. The skimmers, however, remained north in numbers for a long time. The "last" ones on Long Island, October 15, but skimmers hung around eastern Massachusetts until the end of

October, with stragglers until November 8, some of which must have passed by Long Island on their way south.

2. Fewer observers in a much larger territory unquestionably account for "last" dates of common Atlantic coast birds from the Carolinas, nowhere near as late as the annual "last" birds from New England.

3. The shore-bird migration was "about over" on Long Island by September 15, but a particularly heavy fall flight of the five common late fall species in Massachusetts materialized this year between October 10 and November 25. Incidentally, there was a good shore-bird flight on the coast of California, most of the rarer species reported. The avocet is reported from Illinois; 5 remained at a pond in Indiana from October 22-November 10; a pleasing concentration of 10,000 at Ogden Bay, Utah, on November 20, affords a clue to the underlying cause for the occasional individuals of this splendid shorebird straggling east in recent years.

The white pelican continues to increase in the west and to straggle east, fall records at hand from North Carolina and Michigan.

Whistling swans are apparently doing well, and their number is commented on by several regional editors. The biggest concentration reported is 10-12,000 at Bear River, Utah.

Canada geese had a successful breeding season in various western refuges, and a good fall flight is reported in New England, Minnesota and Utah. A late season makes a final appraisal impossible.

The same qualification must be made for the later group of ducks. The fall duck flight is easily divisible into two groups; an early one consisting principally of bald-

pate, pintail and teal reaches a peak in favorable concentration areas between September 15 and October 15; further birds filter in as the season advances, with another great rush sometime in November when the northern breeding and feeding grounds freeze.

There is no question but that a tremendous horde of wildfowl are streaming south this year. New England is outside it and reports a further decrease: New York is barely on the fringe; Virginia and the Carolinas report an increase of baldpate only, a decrease of blacks, mallard and teal, but an acute shortage of food for undetermined reasons is a special local problem. Everywhere else, however, the flight has been good to spectacular. A concentration of a million and a half mallards is reported at the Chataqua Refuge, Illinois. In Missouri by late November between two and three million ducks were moving south down the Missouri and Mississippi River valleys. These figures may sound astronomical to some, but sceptics who wish to predicate a huge margin of error scarcely need worry about the fate of the mallard! It remains to be seen whether the remaining continental winter range will be able to feed them all during the winter. A further increase of bufflehead and ruddy ducks in the northeast is reported, and good numbers of wood ducks from various northern states.

Only New York and Pennsylvania report notably good hawk flights. The apparent increase of the golden eagle in the northeast is something not surely explicable. This fall there were 11 over Hawk Mountain on October 22, with records from Massachusetts and New York. Where all these birds come from, where they were and where they went, say, twenty-five years ago, is a mystery.

Two small land birds are worthy of mention in this column. The starling is continuing a steady decrease in New England. It is increasing around Chicago and Texas, and increasing by leaps and bounds in Minnesota. The tiny golden-crowned kinglet was notably abundant in Massa-

chusetts; the western race was notably abundant around San Francisco!

On September 23, 8 species of gulls were at the sewer mouth in Newburyport Harbor, Massachusetts. With the laughing and Bonaparte's gulls were 1 Franklin's, 1 adult European black-headed gull and 3 little gulls. A tufted titmouse at Waban at a feeder is the first record for eastern Massachusetts. A lark bunting in Massachusetts is matched in California by two warblers, a black and white and a Tennessee. Utah is proudest of a greater scaup and an old-squaw.

NOTICE

Due to increased costs of paper, printing and distribution, we find it necessary to put Section II (containing four Season Reports, a Breeding Bird Census and a Christmas Count) on a self-supporting basis, and will, therefore, make an additional charge of \$1 per year for them.

In 1945 the schedule of publication is as follows:

Jan.-Feb.—FALL MIGRATION

March-April—45th CHRISTMAS COUNT

May-June—WINTER SEASON

July-August—SPRING MIGRATION

Sept.-Oct.—NESTING SEASON

Nov.-Dec.—9th BREEDING BIRD CENSUS

Members, when renewing membership in future, will need to include an extra dollar if they wish to receive Section II. Subscribers, as distinct from members, may renew subscriptions in future for the National Edition of the magazine (without and section) for \$2 per annum (\$2.25 foreign), or for the Regular Edition (with the 2nd section) for \$3 per annum (\$3.25 foreign).

Individual copies of the Season Report, Section II, may be purchased at 15¢ each; of the Breeding Bird Census at 25¢; of the Christmas Count at 40¢.

IMPORTANT!

If you wish to purchase individual copies of the

45th CHRISTMAS COUNT

send in your orders by March first so that we can order the required extra copies.

AUDUBON POST CARDS

Let the yellow-throat, hummingbird, indigo bunting, wood thrush, oriole, tanager, grosbeak, kingbird, catbird or redstart carry a message to your friends. Cards are in color with space on back for message and address, 10 cards—20¢. Add 3¢ for postage. Sets cannot be broken.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

The *NATURE* of Things

Comments on the new
Nature literature by Richard Pough

Ecology and Management

NATURAL PRINCIPLES OF LAND USE.

By E. H. Graham. Oxford University Press, New York. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ inches. 274 pp. Illus. 1944. \$3.50.

Dr. Graham discusses the natural laws which govern the type of wild plant and animal community which will occur on a given piece of land under certain climatic conditions. He then shows how a knowledge of these laws is providing the key to management which will produce for civilized man the highest economic yield from each type of land.

THE PRAIRIE CHICKEN IN MISSOURI.

By C. W. Schwartz. Conservation Commission, Jefferson City, Mo. $9 \times 12\frac{1}{4}$ inches, 176 pp., 1 color plate, 84 photographs. 1944. \$5.00.

A unique and beautiful volume telling, through a collection of extraordinary photographs, the story of the prairie chicken—its habitat requirements, its yearly life cycle, the reasons for its present plight and the management steps that will aid in its restoration.

THE ARMADILLO: ITS RELATION TO AGRICULTURE AND GAME.

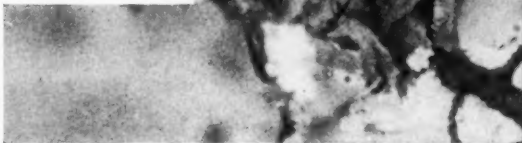
By E. R. Kalmbach. Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission, Austin, Texas. 6×9 inches, 65 pp. Illus., paper covers. 1944.

The rapid and continuing spread northward and eastward of the nine-banded armadillo has aroused a good deal of interest. This bulletin sums up practically all that is known about our sole representative of this curious and interesting family of Central and South American mammals. It proves to be highly insectivorous and capable of being quite useful to farmers.

THE BOBWHITE QUAIL IN EASTERN MARYLAND.

By K. A. Wilson and E. A. Vaughn. Game and Inland Fish Commission of Maryland, Baltimore, Md. 6×9 inches, 138 pp. Illus. paper covers. 1944.

A report on eight years of continuous management work with quail on the 5,322 acre Pocomoke



State Forest near Snow Hill, Maryland. Food patches and good cover seem to be all that is necessary to obtain a heavy population in this area. When these were present, even a fairly heavy fox and Cooper's hawk population seemed to have no appreciable effect on number of birds the area could carry.

THE FOX IN NEW YORK.

By Clayton B. Seagears. N. Y. Conservation Department, Albany, N. Y. $5\frac{3}{4} \times 9$ inches, 85 pp. Illus. paper covers. 1944.

An excellent summing up of the facts about the red and gray fox. Before you get into any argument over the so-called fox problem, read this bulletin and try to get your opponent to do likewise. In essence the author concludes that there is really no fox problem. As a native member of our wildlife community, it exercises a stabilizing influence on many rodent species and at the same time furnishes much sport and a large annual fur crop.

MINNESOTA'S UPLAND GAME BIRDS.

By T. A. Schrader and A. B. Erickson. Minnesota Department of Conservation, St. Paul, Minn. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, 39 pp. Illus., paper covers. 1944.

This bulletin, no. 8 in a series of conservation bulletins, covers nine species of birds. The treatment is in large part historical with special emphasis on variations in population. Current management practices based on the research of the past few years are well summarized and the general outlook for each species within the state of Minnesota is carefully appraised.

THE WOLVES OF MOUNT MCKINLEY.

By Adolph Murie. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 6×9 inches, 238 pp. 58 illustrations, paper covers. 1944. 40 cents.

An extraordinarily interesting report on a 22-month study of the wildlife of Mount McKinley National Park in Alaska. The primary purpose of the study was to determine the role of the wolf in this essentially virgin habitat. At present a very satisfactory balance seems to exist on this 3000 square mile sanctuary. The wolf himself emerges as a remarkably intelligent and likable animal. Don't miss it!

Handbooks and Guides

NORTHERN FISHES.

By S. Eddy and T. Surber, *University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn.* 6¼ x 9¼ inches, 252 pp. Illus. 1943. \$4.00.

A popular, attractive book on the fish of the Upper Mississippi Valley region. It contains a number of chapters on the ecology and management of wild fish populations and one on taxonomy. The guide part is by families and species with keys to both. 150 species are covered and 93 illustrated by photographs. A few are shown in color.

WILDLIFE FIELD NOTEBOOK.

Wildlife Supply Company, Saginaw, Mich. 5 x 9½ inches, 50 pp. 1944. 60 cents.

A book of 150 perforated individual 3x5 inch forms on which to record observations while in the field. Each unit can later be torn out and conveniently filed. Ten designated topic headings preclude the possibility that any accessory yet important data, such as weather, etc. will be omitted through an oversight. The back cover provides a wind velocity scale and ruler.

STARTING YOUR BUTTERFLY COLLECTION.

By Evelyn Gilstrap. Published by the author, *Sanitarium, Calif.* 4½ x 6½ inches, 9 pp. Paper covers. 1944. 10 cents.

A little booklet designed to encourage and aid beginners who want to start a butterfly or moth collection.

Education

FOR COUNTRY AND MANKIND.

By B. J. Reines. *Longmans, Green & Co., New York.* 5½ x 8 inches, 241 pp. 1944. \$2.25.

"Twelve plays about dreams that came true," is how the author describes this collection. These plays which are especially designed for school assembly programs or similar occasions, deal with interesting episodes in the lives of twelve famous men, one of whom is John James Audubon.

EDUCATION IN CONSERVATION OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES.

Izaak Walton League of America, Chicago, Ill.

6 x 9 inches, 31 pp., paper covers. 1944. 10 cents.

A collection of four papers on conservation education presented at the Twenty-second Annual Meeting of the Izaak Walton League, by three well-known educators and one newspaperman.

HANDBOOK FOR GUARDIANS OF CAMP FIRE GIRLS.

Camp Fire Girls, Inc., New York. 8½ x 11 inches, 170 pp. Illus., paper covers. 1944.

The first part of this new handbook contains eleven chapters on leadership problems. The second part which deals with activities contains a wealth of material and has excellent bibliographies for reference.

Conservation

LOST ISLAND.

By James Norman Hall. *Little, Brown and Company, Boston, Mass.* 5¼ x 7½ inches, 212 pp. 1944. \$2.00.

To all who have a love for unspoiled nature this is a tragic tale. It tells the story of the rape of a lovely Pacific coral island to make way for a U. S. air base. The author poses the serious question of whether unspoiled wild beauty will continue to exist anywhere in the world much longer in the face of modern civilization and its appallingly powerful machines.

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

By H. H. Wales and H. O. Lathrop. *Laurel Book Company, Chicago, Ill.* 5½ x 8 inches, 554 pp. Illus. 1944. \$2.00.

An excellent comprehensive text for high school use dealing with the conservation of both renewable and nonrenewable natural resources. The authors, a Forest Service man and a teacher, display a remarkable breadth of knowledge and have approached the subject from a thoroughly modern point of view.

BURNING AN EMPIRE—THE STORY OF AMERICAN FOREST FIRES.

By Stewart H. Holbrook. *The Macmillan Co., New York.* 6 x 8½ inches, 229 pp., a few illustrations. 1944. \$2.50.

Few persons today remember the horrible forest fire disasters of the last century such as the Peshtigo fire which occurred the same night as the Chicago fire and took over 1,152 lives. This book tells in detail the stories of these great conflagrations from the Miramichi fire of 1825 to the terrible Tillamook fire of 1933. Especially interesting are the accounts of the subsequent history of these areas, timber salvage, reforestation and eventually fire protection services.

CONSERVATION OF WILDLIFE.

Hearings before the Select Committee on Con-

servation of Wildlife Resources, December 9-10, 1943. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 6 x 9 inches, 319 pp. Maps and charts, paper covers. 1944.

Detailed reports to Congress by various officials of the four public agencies having the greatest responsibility for the Federal Wildlife Conservation program—the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Park Service and Soil Conservation Service. An invaluable publication for those who want up to date information on the general conservation picture, especially on public lands.

Popular Science

THE RAFT BOOK—LORE OF THE SEA AND SKY.

By Harold Gatty. George Grady Press, New York. 5½ x 7¾ inches, 149 pp. Illus., paper covers. 1943. \$3.25.

This book and its accompanying charts was designed for those who may find themselves adrift in a rowboat or liferaft. Much of it deals with astronomy, navigation without instruments, winds and ocean currents. A section on oceanic birds illustrated with five plates by Jaques tells the habitat and habits of each and the significance of their presence in terms of distance from land.

Literary

ONE DAY ON BEETLE ROCK.

By S. Carrighar. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York. 5½ x 8¾ inches, 224 pp. 20 illustrations, cloth. 1944. \$2.75.

A collection of 10 animal stories each of which deals with a certain central species. The author has synthesized, from what are apparently both her own observations and those of others, episodes in the lives of her animal characters of Sequoia National Park in California. She writes with a wealth of well-expressed imaginative detail.

HOME IN THE WOODS.

By H. L. Kofod. Published by the author. Rochester, New York. 5¾ x 8 inches, 122 pp. Illus., cloth covers. 1944. \$1.75.

A very personal account of the experiences of a nature-loving family with the flowers and birds of the Rochester area.

SNOWSHOE COUNTRY.

By Florence P. Jaques. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minn. 7¾ x 10½ inches, 110 pp., 46 illustrations, 1944. \$3.00.

An account of a winter spent visiting and traveling through the Arrowhead country of northern Minnesota. Lee Jaques' stunning black and white illustrations make this a handsome volume. The book is full of interesting stories about the wild

animals and the people of the region. Its diary form makes it a very personal book reflecting the charm and sensitive appreciation of its author and artist.

SMOKY RIDGE.

By F. Doyle. Longmans, Green and Co., New York. 5½ x 8¼ inches. 128 pp. 10 drawings. 1944. \$2.25.

A collection of ten animal stories. The author has carefully avoided anthropomorphism in his treatment of the lives of some of the common animals of the mid-Appalachian region.

PATHWAYS OF GOLD.

By Edwin Becker. Published by the author, Geneva, New York. 5 x 7½ inches, 32 pp., paper covers. 1944. 75 cents.

A collection of poems about birds, flowers and the out-of-doors.

THE MURMUR OF WINGS.

By Leonard Dubkin. McGraw Hill Book Company, New York. 6 x 8½ inches, 167 pp. 1944. \$2.50.

A series of amusing incidents in the life of a Chicago newspaper and publicity man who has always been fascinated by birds. City pigeons, gulls and English sparrows are his favorites.

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LETTERS

From the Editor:

THE other day, a reader telephoned to ask why there were no letters in the last issue. "It's a good magazine," he said, "but you are making a big mistake when you leave out the letters column."



Thanks, Mr. Hader, for your advice and this month we are trying to make amends by printing more letters than ever—even one from the editor! For letter-writing is a reciprocal affair, and even though your letters are answered by mail, perhaps it's high time for a letter from the editor to appear in this column!

Many of you know that this editor (in common with all editors) sets great store by the letters that come from readers. The editor *must* know what you like and what you don't like. That's why mailtime is the most exciting part of the editorial day. What will it bring? A suggestion, a criticism, advice, counsel and manuscripts!

Your suggestions for future articles go in a work folder labelled "IDEAS," and are discussed with authors who come to the office and with writers who are contacted by mail. Sometimes your suggestions coincide with ideas already "in the works," and that's a happy day indeed, for that means we are thinking in tune!

When our readers begin to telegraph, then we know, for sure, that we have hit some kind of high mark. From Boston, came this message from Richard Harter: HOPE YOU WILL PUBLISH MR. TEALE'S LIST AS A LEAFLET IT IS INCOMPARABLY GOOD ALL FAVORITES AND FINE THINGS FROM BESTON ON. Please note announcement about reprints, Mr. Harter!

At the same time, we have hit a new low this past year with at least one subscriber-family, from down North Carolina way. "Where's the latest issue of A. M?" they ask. "Please send immediately, and we do not intend to renew!"

But why? That's what we want to know. When the magazine fails you, tell us

how and why. You can be brutally frank. It will do us good.



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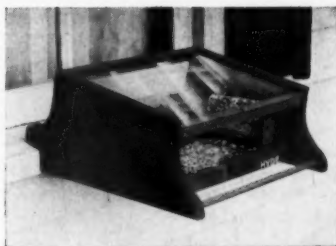
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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Roger Baldwin is a pal. He's never too busy to thrash out an editorial problem if called upon for help. He read the Nov.-Dec. issue on Christmas Day and sat right down to write this brutally frank comment: "I wouldn't for a moment appear to criticize a hard-pressed editor, but may I point out that despite assertions in the magazine that it is devoted to the cause of conservation, not one article on that subject appears in the Nov.-Dec. issue?"

• • •

A. M. readers were proud and pleased to find Sigrid Undset's story of "The Christmas Sheaf" in our magazine and have asked for the circumstances leading up to the publication of this article. The explanation is very simple. We read a letter written by Mrs. Undset on flowers and nature, printed in *The New York Times*. Knowing of her great interest in promoting international good will, we asked her to write something about Norwegian nature, and put her name on the mailing list to receive A. M. so that she would come to know us better. In October, the manuscript arrived, accompanied by this modest note: "Enclosed I am sending you a piece about an old Norwegian Christmas custom, the offering of a sheaf of grain to the birds. I am aware it is a little outside the usual scope of your articles, as it deals to a great extent with folklore, but I think it will give you an impression of the attitude of the Norwegian people toward animals, tame and wild. So I hope you will like it."

Mrs. Undset, in a later letter, has told us of a side of "American wealth" which she has discovered for herself during her stay in this country:

"Without ingratitude to the many kind and hospitable Americans who have tried to make my stay away from my occupied country a happy one (I think though, that all of them who became more to me than casual acquaintances, who became real friends, were what Alan Devoe calls Nature-men) I cannot deny, that the real happiness I have experienced here in America came from meeting the wealth of beauty, the variety and the interesting features of American nature—a thing I was not prepared to find here, as we in Europe hear a great deal of American technical and economic development, good and bad features of American society, but never a thing about the beauty of the American rivers and lakes and woods, the exquisite grace of the white elm and the flowering shrubs, the serene beauty of oaks and hemlocks, the loveliness of native flowers and birds and butterflies. I hope some day to be able to tell people in Europe about this side of American wealth."

• • •

This month, our magazine looks as if the family is having a reunion what with Messrs. Peattie, Sprunt, Teale, Sutton and Devoe all gathered into the fold. John J. Elliott, specialist on sparrows and

the European goldfinch of Long Island, is back after a long absence from our pages. We are glad to welcome a newcomer, also—Mrs. Archer Grover, of Augusta, Maine, well-known in bird-attracting and garden club circles in the pine-tree state, and the wife of Archer Grover who was, for fourteen years, Deputy Commissioner of Maine Inland Fisheries and Game. It is with deep sorrow that we report to you the death of one of our recent contributors—Hugh Birkhead, whose article "Birds of Northwest Africa" appeared in our July-August 1943 issue. That article was written while Mr. Birkhead was with the Armed Forces in Africa and he had plans for writing many more. Now word comes, via Robert Cushman Murphy, that the career of this promising ornithologist has been cut short. He was killed in action in the Vosges Mountains in France on November 13, 1944.

ELEANOR A. KING

• • •

To the Editor:

Your Sept.-Oct. issue was particularly interesting mainly because of the article about the library and Mrs. Beals. The thought occurred to me: what a splendid idea to acquaint your members with the innermost working and functions of your various departments.

Any large organization needs to come closer to its members. Large groups are handicapped by seeming to be impersonal if one does not know the individuals better. Why not then, through A. M., publicize and tell your readers more about the Society's personnel?

I truly enjoy the magazine and loan my copies out until friends themselves subscribe.

BETTY CARNES

Tenafly, N. J.

• • •

To the Editor:



Why doesn't A. M. tell us something about Sutton's warbler? After having discovered the bird at Tampa, Fla., on September 28, 1944, am at a loss to learn anything about its migration. What are the immature and fall plumages? Are there migratory records? Is its winter home known?

My only regret—that A. M. is not a weekly.

MRS. E. G. BROWNSEY

Tampa, Fla.

George Sutton, please note.—Ed.

• • •

To the Editor:

In your Sept.-Oct. issue, appeared two articles of special interest to me—the one by Walter Elwood

on "Let's Build Good Citizens," and another on "Soaring and Gliding."

May I express the feeling that in these times of world conflict and mass murder, reflected in juvenile delinquency on the home front, that Mr. Elwood's plea for new efforts to instill humaneness and the decencies and amenities, which we are in danger of losing entirely, is important enough to spread widely through the schools and other appropriate agencies.

Albany, N. Y.

ALVIN G. WHITNEY.

To the Editor:



The cardinal cover is the best yet. We have enjoyed this prince of feathered fellows from Arizona through every state eastward and northward. Not only does he have beauty of appearance and song, but he is the eternal optimist and always the gentleman. What pleases me is that D. E. has caught the spirit of him. Thanks for that.

H. E. CRUM

New York City

Don tells us that the sketches for the Christmas cover were made last summer in Florida. It was painted in Cape May, N. J. This bird really got around.—Ed.

To the Editor:

I want to tell you how glad I am that you published a map of Mexico showing the location of Victoria, accompanying George Miksch Sutton's article in the September-October issue.

In the previous issue you failed to give a map showing the location of Sandy Key and I have not been able to find it on any of the Florida maps immediately available to me.

Accept my congratulations for your splendid magazine. I would like more biography like the one on W. H. Hudson some time ago—perhaps Nuttall and Townsend, of Audubon's time, and their wanderings.

LENA Z. NEWTON

Hartford, Conn.

The omission of a map showing location of Sandy Key was indeed a mistake, so here's your map, however small. Your suggestions for biographies come at an opportune moment, and we shall pass those names along to the various writers who are now at work on a series about great naturalists.—Ed.

To the Editor:

You asked for suggestions. Here's my two bits worth. Why don't you have some photographic

picture stories, worked out as stunts on identification? How about a cartoon panel or a short article illustrated with cartoons on legitimate nature oddities?

How about more "profiles" on great naturalists the world over. Reprints from articles and books written in past generations about the astounding wildlife of early day America. Articles by renowned writers (ask them—you may be surprised how many will be glad to write for you as a labor of love.)

I hope you can find a little pay dirt in this. And, if it matters, I think the magazine as it stands is one of the best and that it has been getting still better.

JOE WING

New York City

To the Editor:

I consider your magazine the finest to which I subscribe. Its chief disadvantage is that it is too short. I frequently read the whole issue in one sitting, being unable to lay it down. I think the series of illustrated biographies of contemporary ornithologists one of the outstanding features.

GEORGE A. HALL

Columbus, O.

To the Editor:

What a triumph—a Nobel Prize Winner in Audubon Magazine! I think that's wonderful and

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ECOLOGY AND ECOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS WANTED: The library at Audubon House, in order to complete its file of *Ecology* and *Ecological Monographs*, needs the following volumes. *Ecology*—Volumes 1 to 9 and 11 to 15 (inclusive). *Ecological Monograph*—Volumes 1 to 4 (inclusive). A gift will be appreciated from any individual who may have no present need for these volumes.

BINOCULARS FOR SALE: We have a few pairs of reconditioned Hyphos Prism binoculars that we formerly rented at the Audubon Nature Camp. These are eight power with 24 mm. objective lenses and a black leather case. Price \$25 each plus 20 per cent federal tax. Service Dept., National Audubon Society, 1006 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 28, N. Y.

BACK NUMBERS WANTED

Our stock of the May-June 1944 and Sept.-Oct. 1944 issues of Audubon Magazine is exhausted. If you have copies which you do not want, we shall appreciate having them returned to us.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

STATION WAGON WANTED

or Sedan for use in taking colored motion pictures to supply our Screen Tour series. If you wish to donate one not now in use, or to sell at ceiling price, please communicate with J. H. Baker, National Audubon Society, 1006 Fifth Ave., New York 28, N. Y.

Mrs. Undset's piece is delightful. I particularly like Alan Devoe's "Naturemen" and E. W. Teale's "Snobber." Articles along this line are an extremely "good influence" suggesting no end of healthy possibilities for most of us common people. Major Sutton's continued story is another thing I look forward to eagerly.

I suppose it is hard to get hold of articles from service men such as "A Bird Watcher Goes to Sea." I've loved every one of the service-men stories which you have published so far.

The 100 volume library was fascinating. I was relieved to find that I had read about half the list, but chagrined to find that I had apparently missed the best work of some of the authors, even though I had read some of their other works. My only disappointment was the omission of "The Life of the Bat" by Charles Derennes, translated by Louise Collier Wilcox and first published in this country in 1924.

WALTER ELWOOD

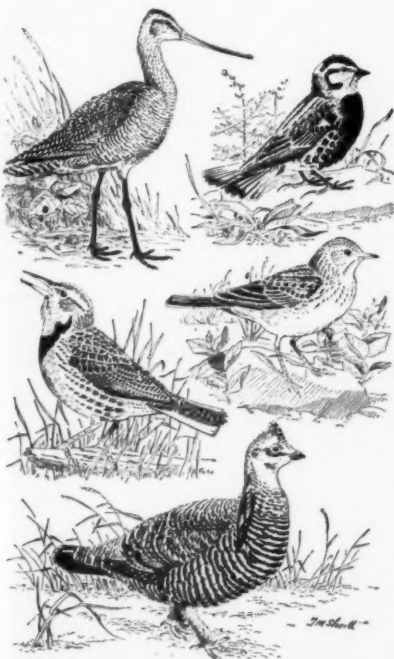
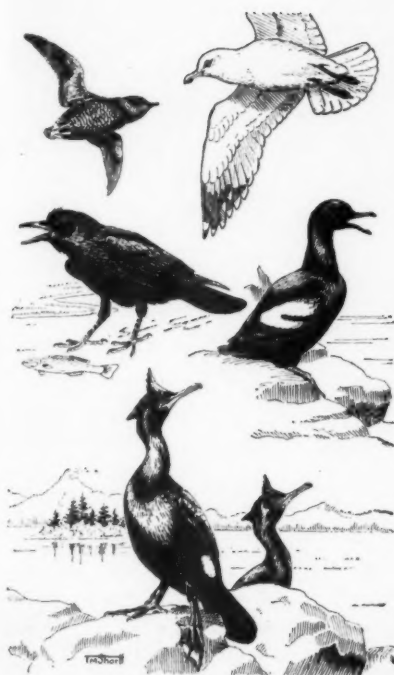
Amsterdam, New York

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GREETINGS FROM PANAMA



Reading from left to right, the "junglesuit" boys are Arthur A. Allen, David G. Allen and P. Paul Kellogg. On a confidential mission for the Army, it's easy to guess what the jungleers are doing on the side—since they have their bird-song recording equipment with them! Enclosed with the Christmas card was a "Transcontinental Ocean to Ocean Christmas Count" made on December 23.—Ed.



Canadian Birds

You will thoroughly enjoy this new booklet by L. L. Snyder and illustrated by T. M. Shortt, both of the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology. The author has chosen seventy-five birds grouped under fifteen different headings—the Pacific and the Atlantic, the Plains, Farmlands and Cities, and all the intervening habitat areas, including the Arctic Tundra. Each bird chosen is characteristic and a near neighbor of that section. In his descriptions, the author and illustrator have linked each bird with its surroundings by good description and accurate and intimate detail. The reading matter and pen and ink sketches give evidence of intimate association with the species described, so nicely complementing each other that the reader feels a familiarity with each of the birds described.

Canadian Nature Magazine

CANADIAN NATURE presents in popular form brief, interesting, up-to-date information on subjects in all the natural sciences. It contains questions and activity ideas, art work and projects for each season. It is written and illustrated by authorities. The magazine enjoys wide United States school use. The articles are suitable to the whole of North America. There are subscribers in 43 States.

CANADIAN NATURE is issued in September, November, January, March and May. The five numbers contain approximately 200 pages, 90 articles, 35 color plates, 160 photographs, 220 figure drawings. Annual index in November.

CANADIAN NATURE was founded in 1939 as a memorial and is conducted as a non-commercial public service. The press run exceeds 28,000 copies each issue.

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